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REFLECTIONS OF A QUIET MIND

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REFLECTIONS
OF
A QUIET MIND

by

ARTHUR LINECAR

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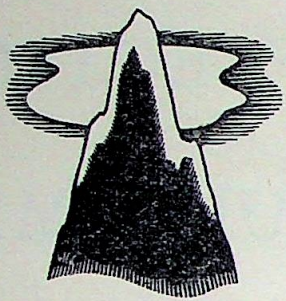

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PRELIMINARY

IS MANKIND floundering in an eternal Slough of Despond? Has humanity, with all its cleverness, merely contrived for itself a steeper and even steeper path into the depths? Can it be that marvellous development has sapped away courage and vitality, has stolen virility, and left only a longing for slothful ease?

During the last century or less there have been writers who suggested that we must develop a ruling caste in the race, a sort of Samurai, lest we perish of our own animosities. Others have preached civil war: compulsion of the remainder by a group in any position to injure all those others if denied its will: or a syndicalism that shall be strong enough to impose its authority on all else. It has been said that each living being shall expend effort according to its ability and receive in return according to its need, but that ability and need shall be measured, not by the individual being itself, but by some person, or organization, or power outside itself; and we have seen this sort of reasoning carried to its alleged logical conclusion in the advocacy of the setting-up of a master race to which all other of the tribes of humanity shall be subordinate.

That resuscitation of an ancient idea, one not unknown among savage races, sends other folk into wrath and fiery denunciation joined with screams for democracy, a term used with so many meanings and to cover such diverse organizations, that it has almost become useless. Do all these various urgings take their rise in a dread sense of huge futilities, or can it be that there is a curse laid on the race? Is it to move from one ferocity to another throughout its tale?

Or is there a way out of all this muddle and mess? If so, what is the way? Can we find it? And dare we take it if we do find it?

An ordinary mind looking back over many years, through multitudinous influences, fancies, as the panorama of memory winds past, that there is a way, that it has been visible for ages, that humanity can take it if it but wills thereto, and that the key to open the gate into that happy road, is power to give thoughtful consideration to the problems of every day, in place of yielding direction of minds into the grip of scalding emotionalism. And this is no new discovery, nor is the expression of it new, for others

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have said it before, but their words have failed to reach most of us.

Brooding over the years that are gone, over books read, over cases tried, over wanderings as a lecturer on artistic matters, over questions posed by audiences of utterly diverse qualities, over odd experiences here and there, has strung together evidences of this, of a defect in our power over our own minds and our fates, and suddenly completed itself by recalling how one man at least, moved by a burning faith in the good quality of humanity as a whole (and in its constituent parts if they get the chance to develop it), attempted to give the key to this road to splendour to some of the coming race. Bringing the evidences and the experiment into focus has been interesting to the reminiscent mind that did the brooding, and they have been gathered here, as, perchance, some others may find interest therein also . . . and, maybe, a little encouragement.

Consider this . . .

"All great movements, every vigorous impulse that a community may feel, become perverted and distorted as time passes, and the atmosphere of the earth seems fatal to the noble aspirations of its peoples. A wide humanitarian sympathy in a nation easily degenerates into hysteria. A military spirit tends towards brutality. Liberty leads to licence, restraint to tyranny. The pride of race is distended to blustering arrogance. The fear of God produces bigotry and superstition. There appears no exception to the mournful rule, and the best efforts of men, however glorious their early results, have dismal endings, like plants which shoot and bud and put forth beautiful flowers, and then grow rank and coarse and are withered by the winter.

It is only when we reflect that decay gives birth to fresh life, and that new enthusiasms spring up to take the places of those that die, as the acorn is nourished by the dead leaves of the oak, the hope strengthens that the rise and fall of men and their movements are only the changing foliage of the ever-growing tree of life, while underneath a greater evolution goes on continually."

From *The River War* by Winston Churchill (Odhams Press, Ltd.)

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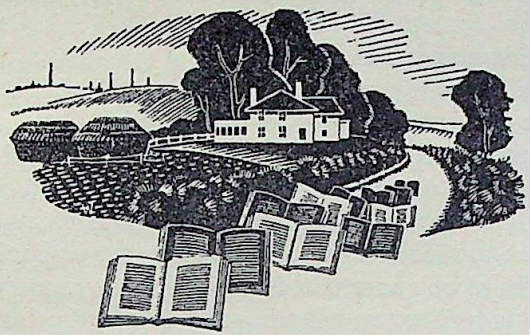

I

THE NOBLER EFFORTS . . . MUST THEY FAIL?

YEARS ago Proverbial Philosophy was in high favour. You know the sort of thing, "Look before you leap," "A baby in the house is a well-spring of pleasure," though some of us thought that there were at times rather too many such well-springs in our house, "Take care of the pence," and all that, as well as that Baconian trilogy that so scourged the naturalness of beefy boys, "Reading maketh a full man, Conversation a ready man, Writing an exact man." Of all those that I remember, I least had need to be told that one about reading. I was too often reproved for "having my nose in a book" as my father put it with nauseous repetition. I look back wistfully on certain days : from this distance they all seem to have been sunny days : and I see myself, a small, small boy, curled up in the corner of a stackyard with my nose in a book. Lustier boys rush about throwing straw at one another or burying one another in heaps of it ; some steadily practise cricket strokes against the wall of a barn.

The memory is very misty, but I know this farm-place adjoined a prep. school, and sunshine brings back, at times, the narrow lane beyond a ragged hedge, the school, and, away to the left, one or two tops of tall chimneys rising from a nearby town. As I look back along the years, the whole distance seems to be littered with books, and myself justifying my father's gibe . . . poring over books, lecturing about books, dissecting books and putting the pieces, or some of them, together again to

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make a striking epitome to be used in a commentatory reading of the books' content . . . Books !

Reading maketh a full man . . . ?

Is it possible that one can over-fill oneself with this reading just as one can over-fill with food or drink ?

Let me get that clear. Am I beginning to think that there is such a thing as a mental intoxication ? I hope not, yet I begin to realize that there certainly are those who have read so much that they are unable to carry the load they have acquired. Further, I begin to be aware that in this amazing century of visible and resounding miracles, when myriad sheets of print shout one almost out of life itself, when voices crystallize out of the vibrations of the air to din truth into the brain, overmuch indulgence in reading may make, not only a full man, but certainly a confused man.

Then, must an inquiring mind ration its satisfactions with some severity ? I do not suggest that ; I should hate to think it, and as I pause on the thought, another saying of the same philosopher comes, more comfortingly to mind, "Writing maketh an exact man." I resolve straightway to try to straighten out any confusion there may be in my mind, by reducing some of the ideas to writing.

Perhaps, in doing so I may not only help myself, but others who are struggling in the morass of instruction, advice, exhortation, tub-thumping, squawking and howling.

By the way, what is the effect on the "reasonable man" so often cited by lawyers, of all this babel of political philosophies, religious variants, social creeds, national animosities, sectional spites, cultivated hates and the like that froths about on the surface of the great stream of life that is pouring along to the ocean of eternity ? And here I venture to make an assertion : The strong current of life made of the mass of individual lives passing from one unconsciousness to another, like the swallow in the Anglo-Saxon story passing from the outer night into the lighted hall and thence out again into the night, is mainly a solid stream of kindness, affection, warm-hearted understanding, and readiness to help others passing along the way. Then why is it felt by so many, acutely felt apparently, that it is incumbent on them to sow hate or to stir up animosity between sections of this great multitude of decent people ? Can it be that there really

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is in the atmosphere of the earth something fatal to the noble aspirations of its peoples?

My reading tells me a hundred times that all these advisers give their advice because they believe in the democratic organization of the integrated society in which we live. Some, apparently, stir up hate within the body politic simply because that body is a democracy and as such lays on them a duty to do as they do. Hence, however, comes some of the confusion that arises in the mind of an ordinary everyday citizen, as it seems difficult to reconcile this profession of faith in democracy with the preaching of hates and the fostering of divisions within it. I am one ordinary, common citizen; a unit of the vast majority in this great country. I have no political ambitions and I do not crave to order the lives of my fellow-citizens, and I suggest that the bewilderment arising in me from contemplating the spectacle of this divergence between profession and practice in so many voluble democrats, is not an isolated phenomenon.

It is wide-spread, and in many cases causes disgust as well as bewilderment. For example, a returned P.o.W., once a Spitfire pilot and then pilot of a twin-engine aircraft, a young man shot down in the Aegean and captured by being hauled out of the sea by the Germans, said: "What on earth are these fellows up to, and why the —— do they do this just now?" He was referring to the threat to break up the Coalition Government ruling this land, in the name of democracy of course, though it is a threat to end an all-party Government, which is, surely, the most accurate expression of democracy we can have.

What *is* the matter with us? Are we, really, incapable of straight thinking?

At this point quotations from ranks and ranks of books begin to struggle up in my mind, one somewhat mockingly . . . I look it up, for its derision smites me. Here it is, and I find it was used by Dean Farrar, but that he wrote it thus:

"Language, it has been said, is but an asymptote to thought."

Why does that sentence persist in asserting itself? Probably because I have been haunted somewhat by the word democracy, and have been wondering whether many of us attach to the said word interpretations of our own. If the Dean is right, then someone has stated that words do not exactly state the thought

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that they strive to express, but merely approximate to it, for "asymptote" the dictionary tells us, is a line that approaches nearly to another line or curve but never actually touches it.

Wait a minute . . . Haven't I read something like that somewhere else?

> "Our words are, as a general rule, filled by the person to whom we address them, with a meaning which that person derives from her (his) own substance, a meaning widely different from that which we had put into the same words when we uttered them . . . "

Perhaps that is how it is with the word democracy, and how it comes about that such contradictory lines of action can derive from a formula stated in words that do not vary as the acts do.

Such as the destruction of a democratic cabinet and government in the name of democracy!

It may be well, then, to try to obtain some definition of our word, so that we know what we mean when we use it. Democracy . . . I recall the famous pronouncement called the Gettysburg declaration, as well as many other statements made on the subject. Rolled out, *ore rotundo*, at great gatherings they are impressive in their sounding majesty, but when applied to the business of living this life they do not seem so conclusive.

Freedom of thought, freedom of speech, liberty to associate in groups, liberty to labour or to withhold labour, religious freedom, and the like come booming down the days, declared as concomitants of the pattern of a democratic state, and yet we see every day cases where the use of certain of these freedoms by the shouters tyrannizes other of the people who are supposed to benefit by them. In the name of liberty, liberties are filched away or even violently trodden under foot: stamped out of existence.

Whence this monstrousness, as Augustine cried to his soul. And an uneasy doubt begins to creep into one's thought . . . Is it possible that the spectacle of these violent clashes of liberties has induced or helped to induce into certain minds the idea that there is no soundness in them, and that the only way to keep a nation in being is for some single power to take complete control, to direct all the people to the work each must do, to condition the thought of everyone, and so on . . . in other words, to destroy personal liberty almost completely in order to produce the

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maximum well-being for all, having first secured the *"being,"* that is mere existence?

But that's Hitlerism, surely. Yet it is obvious that if the freedoms I have cited are exercised by masses of us without regard to the right of the rest of us to the same freedoms, and without regard to the well-being of all the other people in the land or state, then the country will come to a pretty pass and all freedoms will come to an end. Well-being will disappear, and before long mere being, or existing, will follow well-being into the limbo of forgotten things.

It seems desirable, then, that efforts must be made to secure these freedoms for ourselves and for our heirs, but that we must devise some method of using them in such manner that they do not provoke their own destruction : bring about the destruction of liberty in the exercise and the name of liberty : that no section of the nation must ride its liberties roughshod over the liberties of the rest of us. And that such a desirable end must be secured without coercion because when huge coercions come in, out go the liberties we are coercing to maintain.

How is it to be done? My mind goes ranging over the waste of past reading and experience, like the gulls I see from my window on stormy days, swooping and winging over the earth searching . . . searching . . . How are we going to secure, without overmuch coercion, that liberties are secured to us and are used in such sort that no one section or clique shall, as I put it above, ride roughshod over the rest of us : is there any guidance in the vast accumulation of crystallized thought known as books, or is the huge literature of the nations a mere waste, a desert dry and sterile? Is the reading done by one individual of no value to him when he comes up against so ordinary a problem as this everyday one of living in an integrated society? Ah, no, surely, if he thinks. Thinks? Can we think to order?

The idea that we can is a more comfortable thought and one pleasing to everyone endowed with a love of mental independence. We are not forced by an iron control exerted by powers beyond our reach : we can condition individual and total life, and what we do will not perish with us but have some effect on unborn generations because it will add itself to the totality of finished or completed acts, as Comte wrote, and therein gave us something that is at once an inspiration to hope and a sobering

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reflection, inasmuch as it indicates the larger importance of our personal thoughts and acts.

We have achieved wonderful control of our limbs, and over our general health : over wood, metal, natural resources of all kinds : even over electric power, surely one of the most elusive of all forms of power. If we are to apply directed thought to our problems of living in the masses wherein we find ourselves then we must achieve similar ability to control and to direct the mind . . . another elusive entity as fluttering and wayward as the fairies of the legend, and, disconcerting reminder, capable of becoming as grimly threatening as the fabled grey sisters of the northern wastes.

Can we so control and direct our thinking ? If we can, do we ? It surely cannot be that we, so clever in other matters, are, in this highly personal one, blundering impotents ?

Charles Dickens once wrote that we can know to the force of a single pound weight what an engine can do, but, he went on,

> "not all the calculators of the National Debt can tell me the capacity for good or evil, for love or hatred, for patriotism or discontent . . . in the soul of one of its quiet servants."

So, he thought the mind a difficult instrument to master, he also. Perhaps general consciousness of the difficulty has induced inability ?

Let us look for a moment at another writer, who set out his thoughts a thousand years or so before Dickens pondered on the incalcuable quality of the mind's operations. I will quote him at length.

> "More easily did my body obey the weakest willing of my soul, in moving its limbs at its nod, than the soul obeyed itself to accomplish in the will alone this its momentous will . . . Whence is this monstrousness, and to what end ? The mind commands the body, and it obeys instantly ; the mind commands itself and is resisted. The mind commands the hand to be moved ; and such readiness is there, that command is scarce distinct from obedience. Yet the mind is mind, the hand is body. The mind commands the mind, its own self, to will, and yet it doth not . . ."

What about that ? It was written by Augustine, not the

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Augustine who sought angels, not Angles, in Britain, but Augustine of Hippo. Dickens wrote his words somewhere in the early eighteen-fifties ; Augustine, somewhere about the year 397, so that it is apparent that men have been troubled by this particular phenomenon for quite a long time.

Augustine, you note, considers the intractability of the mind, its habit of disobedience to itself, as a "monstrousness." A little later in these "Confessions" he considers that description further. Thus :

> "But it willeth not entirely ; therefore doth it not command entirely . . .
> Therefore, it is no monstrousness partly to will, partly to nill, but a dis-ease of the mind . . . "

These quotations are taken from the translation made by Dr. Pusey in 1838, now issued in the Everyman edition of great books, and I have taken the liberty of hyphenating one of the learned doctor's words, "disease," because I feel that thus it more nearly conveys the concept that was formulated in the original author's mind, namely that this lack of command of the mind by the mind is not a disease as we use that word now, but a lack of ease in handling it . . . lack of facility in the operations we desire the mind to perform : like the dis-ease of the ordinary man in the manipulation of his own hands when he essays things easy to the practised juggler or conjuror.

I submit that we have here evidence that mankind has been conscious of this lack of ease for some thousands of years ; yet we seem to have done little about it. Nevertheless I reject, instinctively, the ugly thought that this very consciousness thereof has intensified the disability by inducing despair of improvement, and by giving us the notion that the inability is a burden imposed by inescapable fate. I put it that the fact that some have tried, as those quoted, to bring the matter to the knowledge of the race, rebuts both assumptions.

Further, as I have admitted I am a bookworm, it may be accepted that I have met the statement that a thousand years are but as yesterday so that my evidence covers but a short space of time. However that may be, I think it is admissible to insist that during a yesterday of any length, one's skill in living should have become the greater by the added practice of that time, unless

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we are to endorse the cry of that tragic character who talked of all our yesterdays merely lighting fools the way to dusty death."

Of course I admit that it may be contended that there is a weight of evidence against me, inasmuch as the existence of the many devices calculated to make life livable on this planet are all of them the result of thought taken by minds that are directed; are acquiesced in by other minds, the majority, as a consequence of their giving controlled thought to the matter. You know, Dictatorships, Democracies, Autocracies, Majority Rule, Laws and Commandments, and all the rest of it.

Then I remember again reading Winston Churchill's *River War*, and that sombre paragraph with which Chapter 2 opens, wherein I find:

> "All great movements . . . become perverted and distorted as time passes, and the atmosphere of the earth seems fatal to the noble aspirations of its peoples."

The gnawing query that makes restless, troubles again . . . If this is so, why is it so? Again I wonder if we really do think, or if we are content merely to feel, and to allow ourselves to be driven here and there by gusts of emotion, or by even less worthy impulses.

I look in a newspaper and I see an advertisement framed in all the importance of a heavy panel. It calls on all the people of a certain shire to wrest it from the Tories for the people . . . and I ask myself if this is an appeal to thought or to emotion. Isn't it an attempt to stir up animosity, especially in its suggestion that Tories are not people? And is an animosity the proper urge for those who have to work the delicate machinery of an integrated state? That is, all of us? Isn't the provoking of animosity an abominable thing when approaching matters that call for careful consideration and skilled thinking?

Of course I know that the advertisement mentioned is a specimen of political flap-doodle so jejune as to be an insult to the intelligence of average men and women of to-day, but I do submit that the fact of its appearance in a widely read newspaper is evidence against the assumption that we apply thought to our affairs rather than guide ourselves by emotional reactions. I say, as Defoe might put it, that such appeals show that unworthy tricks are practised in our affairs, that such can only succeed

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when we decline to think calmly, that they complicate the problems that confront us every day, and that such practices put into the atmosphere the poison lamented in the quotation from *The River War* I have taken the liberty of transcribing.

I belong to no political party. I exercise my right to listen to the propositions of any party, section, clique, or mob, and to consider those propositions as I would consider a matter put before me by various counsel and witnesses if I were on a jury at the Old Bailey, or, dizzy thought, as if I were a judge sitting in Chancery. It is thus that I am forced to wonder how it is that we so smirch, as we perpetually do, the splendour of life : that we miss that great beauty of living that is so near to us all but so carelessly allowed to escape us; and thus, that so many scraps of the works of countless authors will surge up in my mind, creating a possibility of a confusion I have mentioned earlier.

Let me see if I can reduce these insistencies to some sort of order. If I can, I may find help in them. At the worst I shall exercise a mind in directed thinking . . .

Directed thinking . . . Curious that this phrase should have come down on the paper. Perhaps directed thinking is the very thing we need, and perhaps if we had it or used it as a habit when we were facing the everyday problems of living we should exorcize this malignity that pervades the atmosphere of this world and kills the noble aspirations of its peoples.

Even as I put down that string of words I become uneasily conscious that my mind wanders here and now. I tell myself that I am horribly inconsequent in my thinking, and even as I become aware thereof I hug to myself the odd delight one feels in this same disconnectedness of thought, this letting the mind ramble and, perchance, dream. Such voluptuous wandering into a færie of one's own is very pleasant. It brushes aside all practical problems and bemuses the mind with ideas as if those ideas were accomplishments. But it won't do . . . come, pack it up . . . go out for a walk, and let the clean air blow idiotic fancies out of you.

Beyond the shaven grass outside my window is a long line of rhododendron hedge, splashed and bunched with colour. It isn't an arrogant colour, as so much of rhododendron colour is, but a beseeching sort of tint ; a washed purple that almost pleads to us to like it, but fears, as there is so much of it : on the intervening grass plot there is a blackbird stalking along, a vigorous,

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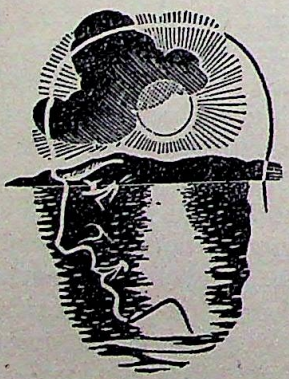
dominating creature in every curve of his perfect body . . . yes, let's go out . . .

There is a splash of wavelets on brown sand, a wide distance reaching to dun hills far off : over those heavy hills soars a cloud flushed with the light of the setting sun : it breaks and, through an opening, shows opal seas that never were, flecked with isles of dazzling whiteness shading into gold and deep purple as the sun goes down his western slope : a cliff far to the eastward catches a beam of the level light and jumps into startling white prominence : the long gold path across the sea dimples and flashes : to the south, grey distance hints at mysteries, and its long horizon at an infinite peace. Sit here, on this cliff-top, I say to myself . . .

Gradually a dim uncertainty away to the south takes definition and shape. It develops a silhouette, and becomes a ship steaming to the east, east with a bit of north in it ; it seems to declare a sleek purposefulness that is somehow conveyed across the grey miles. Other similar shapes, not so sleek, come up on the horizon, and the purposeful leader reveals itself as a destroyer. Balloons over the following shapes . . . ! A convoy, armed against aggression, and with fearless, determined escort.

An infinite peace ? I walk slowly back as the glory dies from the sky.



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II

SENSITIVE MINDS, WRITERS, MUSICIANS AND THE LIKE, SAY . . . ?

THE spectacle of that convoy so doggedly making its way up the Channel had violently disturbed the mind . . . it has acted like a shock administered to a chemical mixture, and I begin to wonder what will crystallize out, consequent upon the shock. When you come to think of it, the mixture that lies in any mind is an amazing welter, jumbled like the chemicals in a beaker. Now, on the shock, what will precipitate? What will combine and show a new matter? A quick shake up often produces interesting results. Will this one?

It does not. Only an old question set in a bygone examination floats up. Perhaps I had dimly recalled it before I went out. I remember the students were required to analyse the passage and to parse certain words in it, surely the last indignity to be suffered by immortal verse. Here is the extract:

"To-morrow and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time:
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death."

and it ceases to be an exercise in an exam. paper right away. It is a threat: the consonantal sequences threaten, and the passage becomes truculently alive. Did the author of it mean to suggest that all those lighted on the implacable road we all travel were fools, are fools? Or did he mercifully put it that fools as well as sages are warmed with some light as they tread the way? The play continues thus:

"Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

Does this help to an answer to the query?

No: I think it does not. But it has a curious effect on the mind, namely, its very quality stirs resistance, mental resistance to the idea expressed in the passage as a whole. We instinctively

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repel the idea that life is so utterly meaningless as the speaker of those lines seeks to establish. He seems to try to provoke passionate despair, but, instead, he stirs passionate resistance. Do violent statements often have such un-intended results? Probably they do, and so here is a sobering thought for many propaganda mongers to bear in mind, especially those who trade principally in vituperation. But surely, attempts to stir up passion in mankind, especially passion of the lower category and therefore the more ready to answer to the stimulus, are surely devil's work? More especially is that the case in peoples that are civilized and possessed of some education and some power to think.

Again we find ourselves back at that idea, the idea that humanity can think, and that it must think. Passion as a substitute for thought will not do. Moreover, there is another danger in giving rein to mere emotional reactions . . . and that is no new discovery.

> "*L'homme est réintégré dans les lumières qu'il avait perdues en se livrant à ses passions.*"

Chateaubriand made that discovery more than a century ago, the discovery, that is, that in delivering himself to his passions a man loses integrated personality, so that the wonderful possibilities inherent in unified power are lost. Therefore two dangers lie before the use of mere passion in the place of thought in the ordering and working of life: one, that damage is done to the personality of the person so functioning, and the other, that irreparable, or at least serious damage to the body corporate may flow from the disintegration of the mass of personalities that constitute the corporate body. We have seen that second danger materialize in our day, and thousands of the young of man have laid down their lives because of it, and, I submit, we have only to look round us at this moment to see examples of the first. How are we to get out of this "monstrousness"?

In his book *Chinese Philosophy in Classical Times*, E. R. Hughes prints this:

> "Dialectic sets out to make clear the dividing line between truth and error and so to discriminate the different threads which constitute order and disorder"

wherein it is suggested that reasoning may aid us to get at truth, and if we get at truth we shall have no use for inflaming passions with intent to work on them for some purpose that may seem to

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us to have some value . . . and the saying I here quote is something more than two thousand years old ! The author who cites it puts in a footnote to draw attention to the attitude of those who propounded the thought he uses. It seems apposite so I venture to quote that also.

> "These later Mohists were deeply convinced of the need for order in thinking as a condition for order in society."

They were, were they ? Some two thousand years ago ? It seems clear that mankind has been warned for ages that thought and reason must be used in the ordering of his living together in the masses into which the race has coalesced, and yet we are told, and we see again and again, that he does not do this necessary thing, and that many of his voluble advisers prefer to appeal to unworthy feelings rather than to sober thinking, and to organize for stirring passion instead of for striving to practise and to develop the exercise of thought.

We have experienced here revulsion against defeatism : shall we not rebut, or attempt to rebut, the pessimistic conclusion that we can't improve in the matter of thinking and of the use of our minds ? We can, and we must, scrap all devices invented to arouse passion for use as a motive power in the ordering and working of life. We have been warned of the danger of imagining that the inflaming of passion is valuable as an aid to the working of a highly complex organism, be that organism an individual, a nation, or a society, but the state of affairs to-day suggests that we are slow to learn.

It is not impossible to improve on the long persisting weakness of humanity in the directing of the most powerful and most marvellous of its possessions, the mind ; for without that improvement humanity seems destined to continue trailing animosity, destruction, filth, through this lovely universe for more thousands of centuries, and to be ever thrust from this highest progress by passionate impulses born of laziness and of savagery. We can do it if we adventure in the matters of the mind with the ruthless courage we show when we adventure in the realms of matter, and may it not be that in discovering and using the power of clean, clear thinking we shall achieve a happiness independent of material things and discover a freedom greater than all those of charters and battling organizations ?

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Am I reaching the conclusion that we must revert to a cold, hard Stoicism, to the banishing of the warmth of human emotion from all our doings? No, I do not think that follows from what has been said. Let us consider the matter a little further.

A piece of music by Ravel comes into my mind in this connection. I can't recall the name of it, but I remember that it was something about a fairy tale, about a princess and a beast. I remember how it seized upon my imagination at the concert where I heard it, and it comes back to me now as a solo, thin and tentative, against a background of orchestra first murmuring, then swelling to semi-dominance, and then dying again to the murmur of its first entry. The thin melody was played by a clarinet, I remember, and it seemed to be the voice of the princess, hesitant yet daring; venturing, though warily, to say words of hope and comfort; wavering as if almost regretting its temerity, yet, warming with compassion and persisting.

The melody, a voice of charm, drew its courage from the full texture background of the orchestral accompaniment which, like summer waves, surged then faded; approached, then became aloof; which held and supplied the strong emotions that were behind all the willings of the mind speaking the lovely melody.

The composition surely said that emotion must persist in the soul, must influence the thinking and the doing of the personality, but that a thread of thought must be woven into the totality of the pattern and must eventually dominate: that thought must draw from the warmth and comfort of emotion, vitality and strength, but must bring that emotion into service and subjection.

This remembrance brings up another, a book, a volume of Comte's *Positive Philosophy*; a yellow ancient, becoming tattered and worn, but I wouldn't part with it for quite a lot of money. Something in that book seems to be trying to connect itself to this piece of music I have been talking about . . . I must get the book, turn the pages, and look for the phrase that is troubling my memories. It'll be one I made a note of in the bygone days of sudden enthusiasm, so, easy to find . . . Here it is. The author is talking about the order in which the mind functions, or should function, through thought to act, and he epitomizes the process thus:

"*Aimer, Penser, Agir . . .*" *

* Emotion, thought Action

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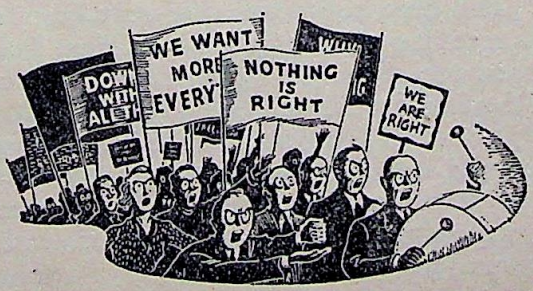
that is to say, emotion, comes first, stirring to thought, and proceeding through that to action. His order of the routine is to love, to think, to act. I turn over the brittle pages idly scanning the work of this man so long dead, and I come on this, which amplifies the preceding quotation, and supports my suggestion of its intent and effect. We should, he says, proceed

"Agir par affection, et penser pour agir",

that is, to act by, or because of affection, out of affection, but think in order to act.

Some of the love or affection that is to give rise to action must be the love of truth, and however much of the remainder is just Christian charity, the love of truth must stimulate the thought that is to guide the action springing from affection. If, then, we act out of affection, and direct our actions by thought, there will be an end of spiteful vituperation in argument ; an end to action dictated by venomous agitation, of emotional outbursts usurping the place of discussion : and there will be a chance for steady, directed thought to take a share in our proceedings when we have to act on mighty affairs as units of a mighty people.

Thus the approach to the problem of living our lives in an integrated group, a problem now thrust before us by the inexorable force of great events, will be more sensible and more worthy of intellectual beings. Surely we have outgrown the Eatanswill methods of electioneering : surely the brass band and the circus are out-of-place when we are called upon to make a decision on matters that may closely affect the lives of millions. Of course they are, just as are infantile slogan appeals to passion, even if these last are given spurious appearances of importance by being disguised in framed advertisements in the daily press.



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III

MENTAL PICTURES AND STERN REALITY

THE way fragmentary recollections, wildly incongurous, link themselves together in the mind is one of the most amazing things the human brain ever shows to us. Let the mind ramble for a moment of two and a thing of shreds and tatters flashes its provocation before the consciousness at once.

A phrase from a solemn book of theological essays jostles with a sudden picture of Robinson Crusoe scrambling over his wall and pulling his ladder after him for his greater security : a martial figure pops out of a low door in an aisle of a famous cathedral just after the clergy and choir have gone in procession to the west door to meet this very man ; and stately services in that same cathedral immediately blur the picture : d'Artagnan swaggers into view, and is ousted by the Cardinal Archbishop making his way in procession round the great church of Notre Dame, his hand lifted in the act of blessing : a childhood memory links with that of an exhibition of extravagant mass hysteria . . . one's ancient ambitions rise in mockery and disclose the horrid reality of one's actual attempts to realize them . . .

The motley crowd gets out of hand, and one is forced to jerk thought back to the business of the moment. One last picture leads the way, a picture that is factual, leading to the sober fact of the immediate. It is a view seen above the clouds. I remember that down below rain was falling heavily, but we had thrust above all that and were in a huge silent vacuity roofed over with a dome of blue distance warm with sunshine : the earth had vanished beneath a swirling, billowing, turbulent chaos of tossing whiteness. This huge restlessness piled mass on mass, opened vast depths revealing profound greynesses, flung itself high to the immense dome above, gilding itself for a brief moment in the rays of the distant sun before drooping back like Mæterlinck's impetuous jet of water that flung itself on high through a fountain but dropped inevitably back to the totality whence it had come, and we seemed to be in a world of furious, silent battling of stupendous masses of fleece-white powers, with concrete realities drowned for ever.

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Yet, almost before that concept had fully formed itself a solid peak burst through the mass, and in a moment another further off . . . Gigantes assailing heaven.

In the same way hard sayings will push themselves up through all the pleasant dreaminesses of the reminiscent mind, bidding us remember that the solid, perhaps stony, earth is still there and that we must come down to it and live upon it finally, however attractive our cloud-land may have been. Some of those hard sayings have been pressing on me as I let my mind escape to my cloud-land, and there discover deep greynesses that are apt to cause one to be loth to strive to get a grip on the intricacies of everyday, and incite one to shirk plain duty. Augustine opened one of those grey deeps, Churchill another, though Comte did certainly warm the mass of recollection with a little sunshine.

One of the hard rocks is this query? Is it possible to live in great masses as we do, and to organize those masses for the greatest happiness of the greatest number, without taking away the liberty of mind and body so dear to all human beings? The practice of drawing together into these masses has been severely criticized by many, yet it continues. Cobbett, you remember called London, one of the most amazing of these conglomerations of people, the "Great Wen" or the "Wen" with the intent to be opprobrious to a scathing degree, and my mental flashback to Robinson Crusoe reminded me that we loved his story to an inordinate degree, like that of *Coral Island* or *The Swiss Family Robinson* because it took us so utterly away from all such crowds, because of its absolute independence, and its glory of open-air life. Yet the "Wens" continue, and grow both in size and in number.

I have heard seamen say, deep-water sailors who tramp the seven seas, that one of the great attractions of their way of life is that, once you are outside the three-mile limit, you can snug down and be comfortable because you are then out of the fret and fume of crowds, the complexity of land life, and the exasperation of this civilization of to-day. You fend for yourself, look after yourself, give your mind to your job, and forget the limpets clinging in such lumps to the dry land. That's all very well, but we can't all of us be seafaring all our time in deep-water tramps, so it is not helpful to us here. For, as I have already said, the "Wens" continue. So much so, that great minds coin a word for their coming together into larger and still larger

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masses. "Conurbations" these learned call the present growths. This word, not quite so repulsive when used to denote gatherings together of humanity in streets of houses, shops, schools, factories, municipal buildings, cemetries, and so on, as is "Wen" that Cobbett was so shrewishly fond of, is used to indicate the coalescing of various townships into a larger growth or totality, such as one sees about Newcastle-on-Tyne, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester ; and the report in which it is most used stresses the desirability of preventing the growth of such amalgamations and even of stopping it in the cases mentioned.

So it is evident that this tendency of ours to get together in larger and larger units is becoming more marked, and the question I posed to myself a bit back, Can we live in these conurbations, in nations composed of larger units than even these, in masses of nations congregated in continents overpeopled now, without endangering life and, more likely, the liberty of all of us who so dwell ?

Do we come together thus because we wish to do it, or is it that we are born into conurbations and lack the courage to cut free of them ? Blackstone, a lawyer, author of an *Analysis of the Laws of England* seemed to have his idea of the answer to this question, when he writes :

> "Society is formed for the protection of individuals ; and states or government, for the preservation of society."

This dictum seems to put a bound to the power of states or government, yet we have seen in our day, states or governments exercising merciless control over the peoples in the state, even to the extent of massacring those who do not accept their political dogmas, and we see also, certain who pose as politicians in our own land and state preaching hate and forcible control over us. Such developments seem to have been foreseen long ago, and such attitudes seem to be no more novel than the urge to coalesce into groups, and that is as old as the craving for security. The question seems to come down to this. Are we to get into groups voluntarily in order to attain some sense of security, or are we to be forced into groups whether we wish it or no, and shall our groups control us or shall they express us and be inside our own control ?

Recently I read a quaintly-worded sentence that is yet a most illuminating one. This :

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"The kings of Gwent of their own free will sought the king as lord and mundbora against their enemies"*

and I found it illuminating because it shows that this association mentioned was one "sought" by the people who formed it, so that the teaching of history seems to be that association into groups was voluntary.

Moreover, we have had thinkers who pointed out a weakness in forcible controls, though they have become so fashionable in these later days, and that exposition does warn controllers not to travel outside their province, which is, historically, to safeguard the lives and the peace of the units forming the group, and, if we accept the full implication of the word "mundbora," and we certainly ought to do that, then we expect that the control by group shall protect all its constituent units and their full legal rights, and therefore cannot force on them control desired by a section of the controllers.

Further, if we are to honour the Great Charter of John, we are pledged to see that the legal rights of all men, existing from of old, and sanctioned by ages of custom and practice, shall not be whittled down. The words in the Charter are these :

"*Nulli vendemus nulli negabimus aut differemus rectum aut justiciam*"

and I have heard a learned argument essaying to prove that the word "*differemus*" should be translated "whittle down" in this context as a fit and proper rendering of the dictionary meaning, "spread abroad" or "scatter" when applied to the right and justice which "we" will neither deny or sell to any one.

I submit that if we all thought of these things soberly and connectedly, our minds free from violent emotional urgings and the spurring of passion, such degrading dictatorships as we have seen in certain places could not come into existence. "These things", that is to say, the functioning of the state with respect to its relations with those who compose it.

More than two centuries ago John Locke wrote that if government is :

"the product only of force"

and if :

*Jolliffe—*Constitutional History of England.*

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"men live together by no other rules but that of beasts where the strongest carries it"

we :

"lay the foundation for perpetual disorder and mischief"

and in these days we surely have seen that proved to the hilt. It begins to be clear that we must take heed to our ways, our ways of thinking that is, if we are to function as we might in our societies and nations, and we must take notice of the wisdom that is ours for the asking, not refuse to listen to the past but be ready to apply directed thought to it.

We have seen herein that something over two thousand years ago men were conscious of the need for ordered (or orderly ?) thinking as a condition of ordered society ; that over fifteen hundred years ago a thinker was lamenting our inability to think in that manner ; that a writer of our own time has felt compelled to ask himself if the fault is not in us but in some poisonous quality of the very air we breathe ! One thing shows from this testimony, or query, namely, that the failing has been diagnosed for centuries, and that the need has been felt for centuries . . . so that it seems somewhat urgent for us to do something about it.

Even as the thought strives to unfold itself it is checked, and then completely interrupted. A weird sound breaks in, penetrating, insistent . . . and oddly purposeful. I am compelled to listen. Is it a siren, air-raid warning ?

Fire appliances go clanging past the end of this road at a point where a great main thoroughfare crosses it. What's happening, I wonder . . .

I have been out to investigate, and I find that the noise wasn't a siren, or an "Alert" as we all call certain warnings nowadays. So I suppose those fire pumps were going about their ordinary civil business, to deal with an ordinary fire.

But I found what it was that had made a noise so like a siren, and therein also found an oddly apt comment on what I had been trying to think about. The whining noise came from military lorries starting up and getting under way. Since darkness fell an army column had come in and had halted lines of machines under the trees that line our roads. I hadn't heard them come, but I had certainly heard them setting off again. But how apt to the moment as far as my thought was concerned, for this

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army has come from the other side of the world to aid nations here to resist the spread of a rule that is to be the product of force, a rule that is "that of beasts", and here is evidence that such lays the foundation for "disorder and mischief".

The column, one of thousands, has merely halted at the road-side for an "easy." The men lounged about, talked quietly in groups gathering mostly near headlights : masked headlights at that : here and there some tinkered with engines in the light of torches held by comrades : one or two fingered the housings of the great guns trailing behind some of the machines : most of them lounged, yawned, and smoked. The signal seemed to come down the long line invisibly, and the loungers quickened into more active life, engines whined all down the interminable line, motor-cyclists raced along down the line and back again, and then the whole armament was on the move in the heavy darkness of midnight . . . Attempts to establish wide rule by force seem to have roused huge powers of resistance. Mischief, surely enough.

What a comment on civilization . . . yet I suppose there must be the use of force sometimes. Probably, but it should surely be only as a last resort, and not because someone has roused in some section of the race a mad readiness to make rabid use of it to get one's own way and damn the consequences.

The Emperor Justinian long ago said this :

> "*Juris præcepta sunt hæc : honeste vivere, alteram non lædere, suum cuique tribuere.*"

One translator renders this into English thus :

> "The precepts of the law are these : to live honestly, to injure no one, and to give every man his due."

and another :

> "The maxims of law, are these : to live honestly to hurt no one, to give everyone his due."

A learned commentator suggests that these sayings enunciate an ethical principle rather than a rule of law, and I remember a lecturer discoursing at length, on this distinction. But surely we must base law on some fine, some splendid ethical principle, or for ever travail in blood and tears, as we do this day. If that is so, namely, that we must base law on ethical principles, then surely we must admit that such a practice requires discussion and

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argument in all attempts to work it, even as the Mohists said: and that process bars out all appeals to passion, all threatening attitudes, all violent attempts to force changes on our fellows, and proscribes the stirring-up of hatreds for certain of our fellows within the body corporate that is striving to work in this sane way.

This is very ancient wisdom . . . just look at Justinian's attestation affixed to the Institutes, as the rules are called, wherein the quotation given is to be found:

> "*Data undecimo kalendas Decembres Constantinopoli domino nostro Justiniano perpetuo Agusto tertium consule*"

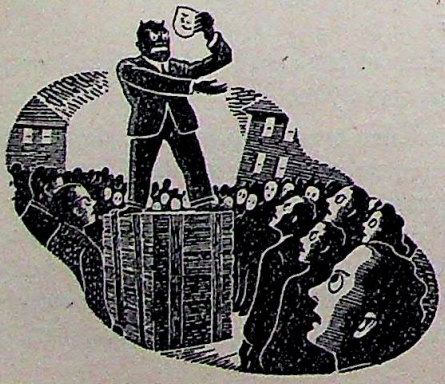
which is translated:

> "Given at Constantinople on the eleventh day of the calends of December in the third consulate of the Emperor Justinian, ever August."

That is A.D. 533.

If this clean sanity has been available to, or possible to the race for so long, why don't we use it habitually? Is it because it is so much easier to inflame than to reason? Or to stir passion than to awake careful thought and steady thinking of it? Or can it be that the tub-thumper would have to go out of business if we learned to apply cool thinking to all our problems, and that he hates to lose his easy road to his shoddy eminence? Or may it be that we can, but won't think in the way necessary? It seems abundantly clear to many observers that we don't, or we should not have Mr. Churchill writing as he did in the passage quoted, nor Augustine lamenting as he did so many centuries ago.

I knew a man once who was convinced that we can think, but don't . . . but we'll come to him later.



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IV

INDIVIDUAL AND MASS MIND CONTROL

THE mention of that man who was so cockily sure that we can guide and direct our thinking but do not, turns the mind along another line. Can it be that our educational efforts are misdirected? Or, perhaps, that the resultant capability roused into use by our educational efforts is perverted from its high possibilities to mean service? And, if that later is the case, are we back at the speculation made in *The River War*, lugubrious as it is? This thought arises because I remember that the man mentioned, though soldiering at the moment when he made his assertion, was a schoolmaster. He said so . . . but let's defer him and his craze a little longer. We will bring him into our case in due course. But the mention of him just now is interesting because it has provoked a whole train of mental pictures.

It is like the peak that thrust up through the rolling clouds and seemed, by its very boldness to draw up others ready to follow a daring lead . . . one clear concept brings up a host of more nebulous ones, each struggling to shake itself free of the clinging mistiness of the surging cloud mass. One links itself with the night when I went out to investigate weird sounds and stumbled on an army getting on the move, though it has nothing to do with that odd event. I was back on the edge of a cliff peering into the blackness of a war night. Down below there, somewhere in the immense darkness, lay the sea, but there was no sign of it; there was nothing before me but that immense void, black, silent, dead.

Stay . . . there is a slight sound, almost like a sibilant whisper, rising from far below. It must be the sound of a long, slow ripple just managing to turn over in the complete calm of the night. I've listened to that whisper in daylight on very calm days, but it feels as if it foreboded, as I heard it on that pitch-black night, and the loneliness of that invisible waste of waters seemed to grip the soul. There was not a glimmer of light in the universe; I could not even see the ground under my own feet; the air was still, as if expectant . . . and the lonely emptiness gave one an inexplicable heartache.

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Loneliness ? Emptiness ? As I peered anxiously into the black space before me, suddenly a tiny pin-point of white light showed far away to the south. It glinted steadily, unwinking, then vanished, and even the whisper of the sea seemed to become hushed. The tiny point of light showed again, a long way off . . . somewhere where the horizon would be if there were any horizon. Immovable, tiny, distant . . . but somehow purposeful. And then, from somewhere to my left rear, with a suddenness that was startling, a searchlight broke with awe-inspiring power over the black waters . . swept this way and that with august intensity ; lifted itself towards the zenith, and was gone. Not a sound had come to me, yet the dread blackness seemed more dumb than before when that challenging beam vanished.

But it had shown a wondrous spectacle . . . The waste of waters was alive with ships.

A mind, somewhere, was controlling all that vast array, and even this oppressive blackness of the night. Then mind can be forcefully directed along a path the owner of the mind wishes it to take . . . and that schoolmaster was, and is, right when he declared that we can do it. Then, why don't we ? I ruminate on that, and Cowper put an ugly idea before me from the jumble of reading that is my past just as I ask myself if our education has missed one of its chances. I quote from "Tirocinium" :

"Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,
Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once ;
That in good time the stripling's finished taste
For loose expense, and fashionable waste,
Should prove your ruin, and his own at last ;
Train him in public with a mob of boys,
Childish in mischief only and in noise,
Else of a mannish growth, and five in ten
In infidelity and lewdness men."

That seems rather to dash my enthusiasm for the schoolmaster, and to suggest that he does not help much in the strife :

"That Grace and Nature have to wage through Life"

as that same poet puts it.

William de Morgan created a character who reflected much on the :

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> "figments of medieval creed and formulary that make a gulf between so many intellects with concord at the root, and play into the hands of their common enemy, the Devil"

and is glad that a friend of his own is :

> "safe in London dabbling in incense, coquetting with Holy Water, preaching Immaculate Conceptions, and not letting his left hand know that his right hand had renounced the Bishop of Rome."

So he, too, doesn't think much of the effect of another sort of education on the powers of thinking that Augustine found defective.

In these days we are deluged with ponderous exhortations to plan our lives, public and private. That's one set of voices. Another set urges us to demand that the Government, whatever or whoever that may be, shall do the job for us. We have even had the spectacle of sixty thousand married women joining in a confession that they have been incapable of managing their job of being married, and so require that the said Government shall pry into and interfere with the intimate affairs of their married lives thereby forcing upon them the success they have failed to attain. Is this evidence that there are many others beside those cited already who believe in the flabbiness of mind of the vast majority of us ?

It looks like it. But, if there is this widespread dis-ease of minds, can legislation by bludgeoning millions who do not stand in need of it, give to the sixty thousand the skill they declare they do not possess ? Is it possible that the voluble demanders are themselves unable to think dispassionately, and so are "barking up the wrong tree " ? Is it not probable, to put it no higher, that something other than mere declarations, than mere compulsion or force, is required if this dis-ease is to be sterilized out of minds ?

We seem to be moving toward that master I mentioned, and perhaps we shall have to come to him sooner or later. For we have seen in our wrathful times what dreadful conditions can come of overmuch compulsion, but at the same time, how minds can be indoctrinated with ideas that are bloodthirsty and inhuman, full of hate and violence. If they can be so handled, can they not be handled towards a finer attitude, towards a real

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splendour of life, a thing impossible under a cloud of universal compulsions because compulsions weaken the will and the thinking of the compelled? Besides, the more we ask for compulsions, the nearer we are coming to that state Locke deplored, namely, rule where the strongest carries it.

Sir Arnold Wilson, himself a Parliament man, supports that view in something he wrote about a weakness in our parliamentary system and the form of government under which we live, in spite of its many good points, to wit that:

> "it pays less attention to justice than to political pressure. The government of the day can be hustled and pushed by a well-organized opposition into making concessions to strongly entrenched groups: the claims of smaller sections, however well founded in justice, have little chance of being heard,"

and the Prime Minister of the day, in July, 1942, warned Parliament that the House must be:

> "a steady and stabilizing factor in the State, and not an instrument by which the disaffected sections of the Press can attempt to provoke one crisis after another,"

thereby bringing into view one of the strongly organized groups Sir Arnold Wilson mentioned.

"Hustled and pushed," says Wilson: "a steady and stabilizing factor" says the Prime Minister. The first can be avoided only in a nation of people who can and do think cleanly, and when that comes about, the second statement, as applied to the legislative assembly of such a people, becomes unnecessary. For the whole state will steady and stabilize itself, in much the same way that compulsions can be avoided by their being made unnecessary.

But how? I hesitate to say. Did you ever read of Mr. Dick and King Charles's head. I have no desire to rival Mr. Dick so we'll postpone the answer to the query, "But how" for a little longer, the while we look again at the state we are in.

We have all heard of the Gettysburg speech of 1863, wherein Lincoln declared that his country had fought a war to assure that Government of the People by the People for the People should not perish from the earth . . . and in that same address he called on his nation to dedicate itself, individual by individual,

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to that same high purpose. This feels like something we have been hearing lately, something we heard yesterday, perhaps? That's why I put its date to it, for we certainly have been hearing ringing words like those used then, stridently circling the earth with tiresome iteration during these last few years. Is that the sort of state we are living in? If it is, do we mean to keep it, as it is so valuable that wars of wicked intensity have been fought, are being fought to-day, to ensure its continuance?

As to the first of those two queries . . . The form of government Lincoln talked about is, we are assured, that one known as the Democratic form of government, and we know in our bones, beyond all necessity of formal proving or evidential support, that at its root, this Democratic Government idea *is* one of the noble aspirations of the race. We know it even in the moments when we shirk close thinking about it, as, for instance, when operative observance of all it entails on us would clash with some petty personal ambition or desire. Then, because it is so noble a conception, is it condemned to suffer the fate of all noble aspirations of mankind due to some virus inhering in the atmosphere of the earth?

When I seek an answer to the second of the queries, I am compelled to feel that all is not healthy with the form we recognize as so good and so desirable, so that one is almost persuaded to believe in the existence of the maleficent influence mentioned by Mr. Churchill in my quotation from his *River War*. Scraps from vociferous would-be guides of man crowd before me, and when passed in review in that way, they become terrifying.

I recall something written by one of them in 1914 wherein he urged the workpeople of the warring states to convert the war into a civil war, war on their own folk, that is: scraps of the bible of Nazism come up like the witches' heads from the bubbling cauldron: bits of Marx: appeals to humanity to adopt Fascism and to wear black shirts . . . what childishness in adult persons . . . : demands for a dictatorship of the proletariat: appeals for compulsory trade unionism enforced by the state: the ravings of those who see the only real salvation of us all is by and through the establishment of a master nation dominating with iron force and ruthless terrorism all the other nations of the globe . . . compulsion, from the cradle to the grave. These

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things seem to show that mankind is tired of the democratic way of life, that in general, we do not mean to keep in being that sort of state Lincoln spoke of in his oration.

Yet, by a curious mental gymnastic many of the protagonists of these various methods of extinguishing democracy persuade themselves or pretend they do, that they are pleading the cause of democracy. In many cases of that sort, one is compelled to wonder if these people really believe, themselves, what they say, for their words are such a plain statement of desire to achieve dominance for a section of a given people over all the others of that same people, that the meanest intelligence can perceive the denial of democracy contained in them.

Then there are those who talk glibly of spoliation, organized theft, merciless expropriation of hosts of their fellows, as if, by mouthing the word "State", or the word "Nation", they made wickedness righteous. As if a state, an organized state, can do without wrong things that an individual would be instantly punished for by the common voice of his fellows, all of them units in the same state.

There are some who plainly assert that the democratic method in a state is highly fallible, liable to horrid abuse, that it is a feeble device plainly showing forth decadent manhood and a weak evasion of responsibility on the part of those who desire it, and that it is a notion utterly out of date that should forthwith be scrapped. Well, these last are certainly plain spoken : they are not mealy-mouthed and placatory, cozening for votes or influence, but they show a trend.

Then the question arises. Are we prepared to accept this trend as indicating an inescapable development in our civilization ? One begins to wonder why we should have all this compulsion ; whence comes it, this force bug that seems to be biting so many of us ? Is the democratic method really so hopeless, or can it be that our interpretation by deeds of a splendid idea is the weak spot ?

An affirmative answer to the main question revolts, and scraps from one's reading crowd in to strengthen the revolt, thoughts expressed by men of greater faith and clearer vision. For example Sir William Ramsay said in one of his Deems lectures in America, many years ago, that :

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"Hellenism had shown how the freedom of the individual could be consistent with an ordered and articulated government"

and he went on to add that this same Hellenism

"organized a system of State education."

as if that system of education were part and parcel of the organization mentioned.

But we have had a system of State education for generations and yet we have reached the pass indicated above: when we come up against a problem affecting the lives of millions we strive to rouse passion rather than to appeal to thought. We have had a State religion, which is surely another form of education, for centuries, and yet we have not learned to think clearly on a line, and to direct our minds to do so when we confront great issues affecting us all, but instead we strive to rouse up the primitive instincts that are available in a state of nature, and independently of education other than that of harsh experience. Is that all we have managed by all our centuries and generations? I think I'd better go for a walk . . .

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V

REMINISCENCES AND THOUGHTS UPON THEM

THE walk was comforting and comfortable, inasmuch as it gave opportunity for thinking of the connection between the two statements quoted above from Sir William Ramsay. Did the learned speaker mean to suggest that if there is to be freedom of the individual in a State possessing an "ordered and articulated government" a system of State education *must* be organized? Whether he did or not, we, who are persuaded that we live in a democratic State, and I submit that a democratic state is one with an ordered and articulated government, have decided on a system of State education. Yes . . . but what is that education going to do?

But the rhythmic stepping along broke the continuity of the thought and seduced me into releasing the mind from dictatorial direction. Thought began to ramble, and reminiscence, that lovely indulgence of maturity or age, wove its charm. A waitress in a café on the Boul' Mich' came into my mental view. Why? Because I have been recalling an incident during the last war, which had thrust itself up by reason of the spot where it happened.

It was a tale-telling to a crowd of men, done in the dark heavy with threatening, just as was the dark I walked in now. The men were armed to the teeth, as the penny dreadfuls used to say; most of them great-coated, I seem to remember; they sat on the ground, on low ramps, on lumps of timber, or stood about lounging against steel uprights supporting an umbrella roof; some sprawled on loading docks. For the tale-telling took place in a railway siding or goods yard, cold, damp and draughty. But the men crowded in.

It was night, considerably dark save for the glow of innumerable cigarette ends and the flickering light of a couple of candles stuck on nails driven through a board. They lighted fitfully the face and hands of the talker and gave mass to his figure as he stood on ammo. boxes and charmed, especially for himself, war clean out of the world. For the place was in France, the men were soldiers of the Great War, and the date was 1918. He was telling, practically in the author's words, the tale of the *Beloved Vagabond* written by W. J. Locke. From time to time gusts of

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deep laughter surged up to him from the darkness behind those glowing cigarette ends, and emphasized the silent attention that persisted most of the time.

When the speaker commented that nothing can be the same after any act is perfomed as it was before, that no individual life can go on after an act done as it might have gone if the act had never been done, that you can't undo the past, a comment that grows out of the story almost inevitably, there was emphatic agreement in the strong voices that broke out of the silence, for men who look death in the face are apt to peer under the surface of life to the currents moving below and carrying that surface life with them, and they surely see deeper than any who glance from safe comfort thereat.

One of the incidents at which these soldiers laughed with great enjoyment was the Vagabond's telling Asticot how he had smashed his furniture with a crusader's mace, a thing, he said with spikes on a sort of iron knob, weighing some nine pounds ; but there was no laughter at his going in agony of soul out to the Pont Neuf, to the statue of Henri IV, gallant on his great horse, and asking that bronze figure what next was to be done, "and the King nodded his head and pointed to the Gare de Lyon." You remember the tale, perhaps ?

In that reminiscent mood mentioned, the thrill of such a tale-telling, to such men, in such a place with mysterious darkness drawn all about us, lives again, and it links with the waitress in the first floor dining-room of that café in the Boul' Mich' because I have been guilty, on satisfactorily wet evenings, of going after dinner from her deft hands, down to the Pont to see if any trick of moving lights reflecting in the wet metal of the statue could give even the Vagabond the impression that the King moved and pointed to the Gare de Lyon ! Dear me . . . what fools mortals can be ; but, as the boy said when he had eaten too many ice creams, "It's wuth it."

That dining-room was a snug, warm place. I used to go there when francs were none too plentiful, for it was cheap and good. Besides, the *vin compris* wasn't at all bad. About a dozen used to sit at a big table against the wall at the end of the room farthest from the front window that looked down on the boulevard, and I marvelled then, as I do now, at the accuracy of that waitress's memory. She would take orders rapidly for a bewildering

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number of dishes, flit away, and return with all the orders accurately obeyed. When one or other of the diners had finished she would give him a sort of scrutinizing look, then quickly run over the whole of the dishes he had had, and at the end of the list announce the total of his "addition."

I believe she never made a mistake. I know, because I asked her. She paused in her nimble movements, glanced at me much as an indulgent mother might at a questioning offspring, shrugged as only a Frenchwoman can, and resumed operations.

Once she did spare a moment to reply to my chaff about her quick and accurate memory. It was later than usual when my "addition" was due and the room was nearly empty of diners. She said I was *gentil*, that I was a *bon g'son*, which she pronounced in her quick speech almost as if it was the Irish "gossoon" crushed up into itself, and she added that one had to be pretty sharp, for *messieurs* didn't like to wait for their food . . . they were like that . . . and what would you, it was her job . . . there was not time to write down the orders . . . I remember, though, that in that easier moment she looked tired. Her iron grey hair was a bit dishevelled, and her hands were restless as she talked.

But, I reflect now, she certainly knew how to train a mind to do what she wanted it to do. The job can be done.

Then, why don't we all do it? And, if we do, each to some extent at least, why don't we use that same trained skill in all approaches to public affairs concerning the running of this highly integrated, democratic state? It is imperative that we should, especially if the state affected is a heavily peopled one; and if it is one that exerts a powerful influence on world affairs, then the need for this capable mind in each unit of it, and the using of the same, become instant and urgent.

At one time there were in this country many small settlements and each governed itself. The thing was simple because it was easy to get all together and so to discover the general will. Later there was a system of manors wherein the responsible men had to keep an eye on the general welfare, on backsliders, and to present at the manor court from time to time all offenders against the found will. This again gave clear opportunity for the working of the Lincoln formula, but when several manors became part of the holding of one person, developed into what was known as an honour, the business of working it became somewhat more

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complicated . . . and when the whole country became one vast "honour," thickly peopled, then the applying of the formula mentioned became a matter of considerable difficulty.

A Great Council came into existence, and from all parts of the country petitions came up to it praying this or that desired by one group or another of the people, and hence grew the notion of a representative assembly that should hear all these petitions and reach decisions to be recommended for adoption in respect of the plaints. So we travelled to the idea of Parliament, which not only heard petitions but legislated, that is, made rules as representatives of the whole body politic, and those rules were considered to be binding on all.

If this method is to realize the ideal set by the Gettysburg oration, then, as Edmund Burke said in 1774, it must be that :

> "Government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, not of inclination"

and we must act accordingly. Further, it must be remembered that, again I quote Burke :

> "Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests ; which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates ; but parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole ; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole."

The more one browses over the wisdom of these departed worthies the more one is aware that each unit in our state must use care and skill in doing his or her part in running the delicately articulated machinery, and that thought, not passion, must dominate each when essaying the task.

Do we function in that civilized manner ? If we do, how comes it that at election time I read that an influential person who has had knowledge of and practice in the actual governing of the State, said to a meeting called to consider matters of import to all, that a party in the State consisted of "frauds and cheats" ? Such language is clearly that of the man with a bad case who must abuse the opposite attorney, or the use of such scurrility is an attempt to stir up passion, to foment anger and hate, the very things that will betray democracy. Violent language cannot be

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confined to language : its influence soon affects action, and the rule of the bully shows its nasty presence.

This violent language is not confined to inflammatory politicians for I have seen in the Press a letter to an editor wherein it was stated that if there is not less interference with the mass of us by "bureaucrats", there will be war again in two years after this international one finishes but that it will be civil war . . . and in a private letter shown to me I read a sentence to the effect that things with us are in such a state, and there is so much unfairness in arrangements affecting us all to-day, that one felt one must revolt!

What? In a civilized society, where lip service is paid to the ideal of democratic government? Is that all our professed regard for the "rule of law" amounts to . . . that "reign of law, based upon the consent of the governed, and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind" as Clemenceau quoted in 1919? We are "the heirs of the ages" . . . with minds . . . with thousands of years of wisdom at our call . . . and we appeal to passion instead of to reason . . . !

Some three hundred years before Christ, a philosopher wrote that :

> "It is not by decrees but by manners that cities are well governed,"

and he went on to point out that a great state or constitution must be one that does not train its citizens in such a manner that they consider :

> "licence democracy, lawlessness liberty, insolence of speech equality, and the power of acting in this manner happiness."

In 1944 it was written that Policy :

> "should not be based on emotions and instincts but on cool calculation."

There's a span of two thousand years between those two citations . . . surely it is putting it mildly to say that we are slow to learn.

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VI

FROM A DREAM IN PARIS TO A BRAINS TRUST

ONE cannot pretend that the mind of humanity is difficult to get at, for it is peculiarly sensitive, as everyone of us can testify if he or she will take the trouble to recall incidents in his or her own mental life. For example, one has a very strong conviction that the mind receives, and responds in some measure to, influences which impinge on it when the body owning the mind is asleep. Consider one instance.

I had been dreaming ; movement, horses, wide spaces . . . I don't remember anything coherent, only a jumble. What had started that series of pictures in the thought of a sleeping person ? I had been sleeping in this room for some little time, and I had been told that a well-known poet had had this room before, some time before. Lines of his had been in my mind earlier, naturally enough . . . lines about a thief and a murderer who had hauled him, being sick and wounded sorely so that he could not fend for himself, through desperate journeyings to a settlement where his wounds could be healed ; and his climax stood before me when I went to bed . . .

"Till I wakened up and found myself at the post of the Mounted Police.
And there was my friend the murderer, and there was my friend the thief,
With bracelets of steel around their wrists, and wicked beyond belief :
But when they come to God's judgment seat—may I be allowed the brief."*

I remember the feel of those bracelets of steel, of two sorts, one British—uncomfortable but not too bad—one American, that gripped the tighter the more one struggled, and hurt like hell . . . clamped on my own wrists in a British police office, where I was being given a demonstration showing how to use the articles . . . but when I went to bed, I opened the curtains the poet had often opened, dismissed these thoughts from my mind, flung open the window, and slept like a child, as far as I know . . .

* Robert W. Service.

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Until that muddle of dreams hit me . . . horses, wide spaces ; movement ; looking down from high up, along the face of a building.

I must have moved in my sleep, and the pictures changed . . . no, sounds of harness came in . . . I thought I was dreaming still, but it must have been that I was wakening, for in a trice I was wide awake staring at the thin daylight striving to come in at the open window. What had got at my brain, and started all this ? It must have done it when I was sound asleep. I listened acutely.

The narrow street I was staying in opened on my right, if I stood looking out of the window, into the Rue Soufflot, a gentle rise from the Boul' Mich' to the Panthéon close at the end of my street. From somewhere down that rise came the sound of horses' hoofs on the stones of the street . . . quite a lot of them : the noise grew louder and the jingle of harness laced into it : it became rhythmical as it drew nearer, and in a minute I hopped out of bed to stick my head out of the window to see what it was. Cavalary riding up the broad Rue, and turning into the narrow street below me as I looked.

Now, the distant clatter of that detachment must have reached my mind from some point well down the Rue while I was sleeping, and must have started a whole train of mind movement ; so that the mind certainly is not a dull instrument in its receiving of stimuli.

I got back into bed, for it was not five o'clock, and slept again until the chant of the ragman woke me to full day. I had often listened to that musical call. It sounded like "shaytsh'fon," rising to the middle "sh" and falling to the final nasal "on" that was drawled as if the man loved it. *J'achète chiffons* was what he was chanting, I believe, and it was followed by the sound of the wheels of his hand-cart on the paved road as he moved his slow way along the narrow street. He didn't chant while pushing the cart, but always grounded its legs with a scrape and then musically announced his willingness to buy *chiffons*. The regular rhythm of clatter, scrape, chant, was haunting in its unbroken sequence . . .

When I went out that day, the hotelier stood on the pavement before his door, shirt-sleeved, portly, his moustached face grim and unsmiling. The franc was in a bad way, and he was always angry thereat.

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He had been at Verdun, I recall, so this memory must come from some time in the twenties of this century. He told me that morning that the fall of the franc was due to *les spéculateurs*, and he roundly abused all such blood-suckers and cursed their machinations. He also said that he had a few thousand francs tucked away in a safe in his bedroom, and that no *spéculateur* would ever get at them. I remember that I suggested that there were many in France who also had a few thousand francs tucked away in homes, where the said francs lay idle year after year. He gloated over the fact, for fact it was he averred, and seemed to think that all his compatriots who did so were getting one in on the speculators in exchange.

If I expressed a wonder whether those francs so hid away all over the country would, if in circulation through the banks, help the franc to a better state of health, he immediately got angry again. I look back now, and see him again, his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat, his face bristling with anger against some person or persons unknown: I remember a phrase of Henri Barbusse, about Verdun, where this same man had been:

"Peu à peu les hommes, se détachment des profondeurs"

and I wonder if men will, or can, detach themselves by little and little from the dimnesses of their own mental dugouts, or if their strong emotions will always thrust them back when they try to emerge. Perhaps this sensitiveness of the mind that makes it so easily accessible is the reason why it is so readily seized upon by emotion, especially by the lower emotions such as fear, anger, spite, hate, jealousy, and the like; and if that is the case, then the more shame upon men and women who seek for their own purposes to stir up those emotions when appeal to thought should have place.

My hotelier seemed incapable of allowing himself to think on the possibility that the individual acts of the units in a state might strongly affect the total state and its well-being. But can any state be wiser than the total wisdom of its constituent units, or even the average wisdom of the units?

We seem to have got a long way from the clatter of cavalry riding at early morning along a narrow paved street, and it may be scoffed that these isolated incidents are of no value in showing a tendency or a weakness in the mass of mankind, namely, a

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tendency to allow emotion to usurp the place of clear thought, or a weakness in power to control and direct the operations of one's own mind.

But are these incidents so isolated as all that? I submit that my citations from Augustine, from a writer of the nineteenth century as a witness from the nearer end of development, and from others from various points intermediate, establish that my samples are not really isolated incidents, but are veritably *samples*, from a mass. Think of the Suffragette movement, and realize what it really imports. "Suffragette movement" asks a youngster, "what is that?"

First and foremost it was a mass demonstration of unbelief in the quality of democracy, in the value of democratic organization of the state. Then, it was an attempt to force others rather than to convince them, a procedure at enmity with all ideas of real freedom, as has been realized for two thousand years as witness this from Master Meng:

> "When men are subdued by force they do not submit in their minds, but only because their strength is inadequate."

If the mind is not convinced or moved to submission then the agreement obtained by force can only persist as long as the force is available; and as long as the force is available and used, there is no real freedom.

The Suffragettes, my young enquirer, were women who demanded the extension of the franchise, the power to vote at elections, to women; a demand that could have been made irresistible if only most women in the land had been converted into believers in it and desirers of its granting. But the organization converted its members into a gang of screaming shrews who said in effect that they would force their will on the state, or they would see to it that the state should not function at all. Their oratory was often as intemperate as their acts, and many of their acts were a disgrace to civilization . . . and the whole horrid exhibition was a striking example of the subordination of thought and reason to mere passion.

There were people in other countries, as well as some in our own, who pointed to the affair with fingers of scorn, declaring that the use of such coercion inside the state showed that democracy was a decadent and feeble method of government,

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and that a country that believed in it did so because it was lazy at the core and incapable of really running its own business.

Or is it that we must admit that the individual mis-use of the thinking powers is at the root of all such troubles? And that that same mis-use leads to a readiness to appeal to force of all sorts, even within our own land and against our own people? Were there not, once on a time, gangs of young men who got themselves into black shirts and swaggered about the place in flabby imitation of a foreign force-monger and his organization? If there is a subtle quality that vitiates the noble powers of the race of men, then surely it is this dis-ease in the use of those same sensitive minds that open the prospect of splendour before us.

Some time ago I was invited to be present at a sitting of a Brains Trust; not *The* Brains Trust, please mark, and I was taken by car to the place where it was to operate. It was a lovely journey, through romantic country, and at one point, we ran for nearly two miles along a magnificent natural avenue of dignified oaks, hoary and patriarchial in their strength. There were no hedges beside the road, so that the avenue looked like the aisle of a giant cathedral. On the left, seen between the massive trunks stained with age, the land fell gently away into blue distance; on the right, it rose and fell in harmonious curves.

Away behind us, across country, I could still see prehistoric rings raised well above the road level, almost like Glastonbury Tor as seen from a distance, and that monument to prehistoric man intensified the feeling of being in a vast place of age-old solemnity, where humanity ceased its fretting and the tumult of life stilled into austere beauty.

The sitting of this amalgamated wisdom was to be held in a military establishment that had grown up because of the war. The room when we reached it was crowded, uncomfortably crowded, with men and women in khaki, vigorous creatures, young and splendidly alive. There was a comfortable haze of tobacco smoke hanging in the air, and somehow a feeling of immense friendliness invaded a newcomer's mind as one came from the damp darkness without into the guarded light of this humming room. It hummed with conversation and trickles of laughter.

At one end of the room sat the Brains Trust, five men, at a green-covered table, and with them a young officer who was to

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be the question-master. There was some suggestion of excitement when the box containing the questions was placed on the table before the question-master and he drew it towards him, from which I gathered the impression that the folk who had posed the questions were there present, and that there was some curiosity as to whose questions would come up out of the box when the question-master should dip his fingers into it.

As the slips of paper were brought out, unfolded and read, the audience gave no sign that might enable one to spot the writer though the signature at the foot of each question was read as well as the question . . . until this was read and had been somewhat answered :

"Does a rise in wages necessarily cause a rise in prices?
Sergeant ——"

We had been told that there were two expert economists on the Trust, a barrister, an author, and a research man in History. So one might expect a clear and cogent answer to such a query. Economist number one started the fun. I'd heard that he was a prospective parliamentary candidate, but whether he was or no, he talked very like one, with all the circumlocution that seems inseparable from election oratory. Perhaps it is supposed to give a round dignity to platitudes, and, like jam about a pill, to secure acceptance thereof.

Anyway, this economist talked very learnedly and very impressively. What he said amounted to this. Prices rise when there is a great demand for a commodity, or when demand outruns supply; many capitalists manœuvre shortages by corners, rings, and even by destruction of supplies, in order to bring this happy state of shortage . . . happy for the seller, that is. He painted a terrific picture of these wicked capitalists, and declared them to be soulless exploiters.

Another member of the Trust said he knew of a factory where quantities of a commodity were held off the market, and the workpeople put on short time, so that there should be a shortage, and that the manufacturer could get a higher price for the articles he did consent to sell. Then the second economist followed on much the same lines as those taken by the first one, until he was interrupted by a voice from the back, which remarked deeply, that strikes shortened supply intentionally and for the

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sole purpose of forcing a higher payment for the strikers out of the commodity, and was that exploiting and . . . The speaker brushed this aside and attempted to proceed with his criticism of employers.

By this time the physical atmosphere was distinctly thick, and the mental one was becoming tense. The young officer intervened with a suggestion that there should be a pause for a moment while the room was aired a bit . . . and this airing was cautiously done. When the meeting settled down again a sergeant interrupted the discourse of economist number two by asking if the question-master would read the question again. There was a roar of laughter at this, and several of the audience slapped the sergeant on the back, and there was a general nodding of heads at him . . . and that was the only time when the writer of a question was identifiable by the visitors.

On the re-reading of the question a member of the Trust with a diffident way of speaking said he would try to answer the question, as he conceived that the questioner had not desired a lecture on economics from certain points of view, but a genuine answer to a simple or simply expressed question. The audience quickened visibly at this, like the Irishman expecting a real good row, but the speaker went on quietly. You see how the thing went, don't you?

I suggest that the talk of the economists, as they were said to be, didn't attempt to give a straight answer to a straight question. Why not? It surely couldn't be that members of a Brains Trust could not direct their own minds and compel them to get away from prejudice sufficiently to free them for the real consideration of a question before them? But if that is not the explanation of the attitude taken, we begin to suspect a proneness to force propaganda views, whether the occasion be appropriate or no, and regardless of truth, simplicity and the fearless facing of a question . . . and surely that is a thing impossible to honourable men possessed of education in liberal degree.

Even if it can be urged that a mixture of motives works in cases like the one cited here, and there have been cynics who have averred that when placed in such a position we are sure to try to impress, to show off, to swank with our learning, to be urged not a little by vanity, and all that; but even if that be admitted, then surely it becomes clearer than ever that the power to handle

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and direct our own minds becomes more and more desirable so that such mean motives can be sacked at will and prevented from leading us into dubious acts when we are expected to be merely honest and fearless.

The need for developing the power of undistorted objectivity in mind-exercises becomes more and more obvious.

On the night of the Brains Trust I have mentioned, it seemed to me that the two men whose attempts I have summarized were moved at the reading of the question to attempt to answer it on its merits and with precision, but that when speaking they felt that this was an opportunity, not to be missed, to put over some political idea each felt he ought to push. Consequent upon this partial willing, this imperfect directing of the mind, they did neither properly, the pushing of the idea, nor the frank answering of the question.

Moreover, the attitude of the audience strongly suggested that it, too, resented the way in which the economists dealt with the query.

Accidentally I heard another example of this sort of thing, and this time from a sitting of another, but a much mightier, Brains Trust. The questioner desired to be informed whether, if big business in this country is to be nationalized, will the Trade Unions be nationalized also. The person called on to answer was, I believe, a Member of Parliament. He did answer the question precisely, by saying, "No . . . " and with emphasis.

He pointed out that big business failed to do that for which it was set up, namely, to provide the public with services or commodities at a reasonable rate, and that the cause of this failure was the big business pre-possession with profit-making, either for individuals or for shareholders. He said that these businesses deliberately fostered shortages in order to force up prices, simply to make more profit for the wicked persons mentioned, thereby failing in their plain duty, and penalizing the consumer instead of providing him with things he needed.

His argument wouldn't have satisfied the member of the audience mentioned a bit earlier, who had objected that Trade Unions did that very same thing, by strikes and other methods. Moreover, the Trade Unions fail in their job, inasmuch as they fail to control their own members and to get them to act on agreements made in their name and for them by the Unions.

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So if failure to do their job and the penalizing of the people for profit condemn the business man, then they also condemn the Trade Union, and the like penalty, if it is a penalty, should follow.

I am not discussing or criticizing the position taken up by the speakers quoted or reported : I am merely collecting examples of messy thinking, due, I submit, to inability to clear the mind from prejudice, propaganda, emotion, and so on, and to inability to direct that mind into a line of fearless, objective thinking, a thing one should develop especially when attempting to deal with the fate of thousands of people. In other words, I am submitting examples of the "dis-ease" in the matter of controlling one's own mind that Augustine spoke of so many years ago, and that a twentieth century author surely had in mind when he made a character of his say :

> "May the Almighty damn and destroy me utterly and for ever if I compromise in one particle when I am thinking . . . "*

This uncompromising objectivity in thinking should surely be the rule with those who essay to influence and guide the minds of others, even if its inevitability leads to conclusions the person would rather avoid as a matter of policy. It should prevent one from shying off from a direction that may prove to lead to awkwardnesses the person doesn't like to face.

"Shy off"? I remember an occasion, when I was a lad, on which my father came home and announced that he was going to give stable room to a certain horse. I seem to remember that the owner of it was passing it over to us, temporarily I think, because he had difficulty in paying his way, and that my father was a creditor. The animal came, a lanky chestnut, beautiful to look upon, and as nervous as any cat. She was partly broken to the saddle. My father decided to finish that job and to ride her. The first part of it was done in our own boundaries, but presently she was taken out on the road.

She didn't go far.

The stableman who rode her came back with her, himself all hot and bothered ; and she was none too good in condition either ; and reported that he hadn't got her half-a-mile : she just would not go. This happened several times during the next

* *Brynhild*—H. G. Wells.

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week or two. I was fond of the horse ; physical beauty always did have a strong attraction for me, and my head was full of Ainsworth, and hard-riding highwaymen, Dick Turpin and his ride to York, and all that, and I thought I could do better than the stableman . . . or my father, old hand as he was at the game. Besides, she seemed to like me a bit ; anyway she would rub her nose on my coat and get me into a row for having slobber on it when I went indoors. At last I was allowed to try.

She had a lovely time with me. We got along, her action was beautiful I remember, for about a mile, and then something on the ground caught her eye. She stood on her hind legs instantly, and pirouetted about the road, but she declined to pass the spot . . . bit of paper, or something of that sort.

At last, clinging like a limpet to a rock, I zigzagged her about and got her past the place by deceiving her into thinking we were making a wide turn towards home . . . and we went on. Gingerly, in more senses than one !

But not for long, for at everything on the road, or catching her eye aslant, she shied sideways, standing on her hind legs to do it. I clung to her steep back while she, standing on her hind legs, backed me into a thick hedge that had little of the yielding quality desirable in such an emergency : she stood up and side-stepped featly at a wet patch in the road : a sudden tossing of the hawthorn in a bit of breeze sent her off sideways so swiftly that I barely escaped being shot clean into a particularly nasty ditch.

She was an artist in shying, and could have taught a trick or two to those argumentative folk who are so apt to shy off issues they do not like.

However, she did improve in time, so perhaps there is hope for the rest of us.

For it is clear that the job of improving our mental methods can be effectively done. One morning I saw in the advertisement of The Brains Trust the name of a knightly professor I once knew. He was a member of a committee on which I also sat. I remembered his encyclopædic knowledge, especially of books and philosophy, of men and things : and his accuracy of memory was disconcerting if one happened to be possessed only of a cloudy remembrance of the matter quoted. I decided to listen that night.

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The professor was exactly as I had remembered him. His strong voice tackled the questions with a downrightness that was refreshing; no prejudice, no bias, no adjective considerations were allowed to affect the replies. Obviously he was thinking of the question in hand each time, simply and objectively, and directing his mind thereat fearlessly. Moreover, there was also a musician, a famous musician, answering. He, too, tackled the questions with pure objectivity that was a delight to hear. So the job, namely the job of achieving the opposite of the dis-ease Augustine diagnosed, can be done.

Perhaps it is unkind to cite our army brains trust, one working under difficulties, and anyway there may be some excuse for it inasmuch as it carried two economists, for we have it on the authority of President Truman that:

"sometimes one economist is too many."

Freud states that in dreaming we are influenced in the shaping of the dream by upsurgings in the mind from the unconscious, and he draws some analogy between dreaming and the making of witticisms, or what he calls "wit-making," and he suggests that there is pleasure in the overleaping the usual inhibitions that custom and habit have imposed on our mental proceedings. This overleaping may be the result of the invasion by, or from, the unconscious. If this is realized perhaps the knowledge will aid us in acquiring the power to oust emotional control when we wish to think objectively, as we may find that the emotional upsurge originates from the unconscious, and in that way we may get rid of the habit of shying off from looming conclusions when we ought to face them squarely in order to think them out fearlessly.

This may call for some effort, as Freud himself warns us when he quotes Lipps as writing:

"The intellectual realm of our thoughts and conceptions does not reveal itself to us on superficial consideration . . ."

though I remember a man who seemed to have found a way of dealing with the dis-ease mentioned several times herein that did not involve analysis of the thought processes so complete as that used by the great psychologists. I fancy I've mentioned this man before, but, if I may use one of Freud's own phrases, "We shall have to take up this problem at another place."

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VII

SNAPSHOTS

A LITTLE GIRL came into my workroom. She was about three feet high and three years old : she advanced with a bewitching hesitancy, her little brow slightly puckered as in mute inquiry ; and her right arm clutched tightly, as if deriving thereby a courage not too firm though quite determined, a rag doll, black and limp, with limbs waggling senselessly as the little one came shyly forward. Who could brood on the unconscious with this vivid scrap of life approaching, dainty lips slightly apart and a lurking smile fluttering behind the oddly grave expression of the bright little face ?

I made myself smaller in my seat . . . she instantly accepted the gesture, deposited the wambling limbed doll on a chair, and climbed into the space I had contrived : she snuggled close, and talked in her baby language, essaying words she could not accomplish, and struggling with half-formed thoughts that were beyond her small vocabulary. She asked for a book, which, of course, meant a book with pictures, and when I agreed, she slid down and made for a book-table wherein there were a number of brightly covered volumes. She walked solemnly round that table, surveying the contents of the compartments, and a tassel hanging from one of the books caught her eye.

"Dish one ?" she asked touching it. I said "yes," and asked her if she could get it out. She answered that one by extracting the book and trotting to me with her whole face alight with pleasure. It was an album of snap-shots, one of many like it and others containing picture postcards . . . I was for it, for she worked her way, then and on subsequent visits, steadily through the whole lot, asking innumerable questions and stubbing her small finger on detail after detail in one picture after another as she indicated to me things she recognized or required to be informed about.

But she always came back to the one that was her first choice, and, in a little time, she began to neglect the others in its favour. It was entirely filled with "homey" things such as a picture of someone she knew alighting from an aeroplane ; a snap of her grandmother taken years before this little mite had given that

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dignity to the said lady showing her standing on a bridge at Simonsbath looking down at the trout larking about in the river below; her father in his bachelor days . . . she recognized him instantly and rushed into quick speech in her baby language to tell me that he was coming, soon . . . and the house that was his home when a youth.

It wouldn't be wise to make deductions from her clear preference for this one book about the movements of her baby mind, though one might be tempted to do so, for there is a sneaking suspicion in my own brain that the bright tassel hanging from the book accounted for some of the preference, and that the small size of the book as compared with the large bulk of the others also had something to do with it, so that the charm of the home things and of finding in a book, face or place she knew did not count for so much as one might suppose, and so there was not in the act of choice any precise thought, but merely attraction of colour and smoothness of touch attaching to an object readily handled.

However, she did work through the whole collection more than once at a sitting, and then she would slide down from her seat beside me, tuck the disreputable-looking black doll under her arm and wander off to find her mother.

The first time she did that my workshop worked no longer, for the books lying about tempted, and I fell . . . into idle dreaming over the pictures they contained. They certainly were alluring, and recalled to life a host of sleeping memories.

Here's one of a junior officer of the mercantile marine taken in Buenos Aires and I well remember saying that it exactly expressed his saucy competence . . . where is he now, I wonder? . . . and here another of a man in Sarawak, on parade looking very military though his force is a police one, and memory jumps to an invitation given by another man to go and see him in the "loveliest island in the world, Penang" and to dreams of eastern seas and lotus nights. Idle dreams . . .

Here is a picture of Bonn, and I notice I didn't write under it, as under most others, anything to remind me of the reason for my getting it: I remembered Bonn too well, so I turn over to other places . . . Kirkstone Pass, for instance. I bought that card because I wanted to recall at will a spot not far from the one depicted in the card where a thin spillover of water, glittering

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and mysterious, made a line down the black face of a precipice ; a silver streak some couple of hundred feet long, instinct with quivering purpose, trembling though never wavering, and, by reason of its distance from us, silent as if it were really a taut string stretched down the face of the sheer rock by some giant hand that would presently touch its vibrations into tremendous sound.

Between us and this thread of falling water lay a broad valley dotted here and there with browsing sheep, and in its great concavity, diversified with huge mound and sudden outcrop of harsh rock. Behind one of the mounds, green and rounded, the spill of water that so attracted one vanished, without a sound, without a splash visible to us . . . there was just that strip of vibrating purposefulness glittering soundlessly before the face of the dark rock. It was not possible to get a snap of it, so I bought a view of the pass ; one showing the country near the place where we saw the fall, and now, years later, a mere glance at that picture postcard revives all the odd feelings of mystery, aloofness, inevitability and agelessness that rose in one's mind at the distant spectacle seen for a few moments years ago.

Idly my hand turns more pages of the album; warm emotion wakes memories sharp and clear. They persist, then begin to get into a jumble, and I recall a scathing remark about people loving to bathe in sentimentality . . . I put it aside and go on turning the pages : for a few minutes at any rate, the indulgence, sentimental or not, is too pleasant to abandon. What comes up, almost like the shades at the bidding of the Witch of Endor ?

A picture . . . but my mind is for the moment distracted from it, by the obtrusion of an old Spanish beret that hangs in my locker now . . . because the picture is of San Sebastian, and bears the legend :

Vista desde el monte Urgall."

It recalled the beret and many a forgotten impulse, together with Q's Corporal Sam . . . on his back resting his head on his wounded hand and talking to Sergeant Wilkes as the smoke of the burning town rolls :

"heavily across the middle slopes of Mount Orgullo"

and the Iron Duke stalks into the picture as the close packed pages of the edition of Napier's *Peninsular War* that I once read obliterate the attractive type of Q's tale.

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Almost before it gets mental definition, others push in . . . a book I read about the civil war . . . in Spain, the tremendous fighting about Madrid . . . Ah, Madrid . . . What was the name of that book, now? I am too luxuriously inert among all these memories to get up to find it, but I seem to see a picture that, I persuade myself, I saw in it, and the name Madrid has recalled that picture, and with it come the savours of old ambitions passionately strong in those gone days but pathetic now, as three figures in the recalled picture stand before me as the men shown talk and consult maps of the country they are trying to travel in the car that is beside them.

They were newspaper men: I had known one of them in France in 1918, another I met frequently in the prosaic surroundings of a suburban railway carriage a little later . . . My mind is so suffused with warm emotion, agreeable though shot with poignancy here and there, that I am absolutely sure that I have recalled the picture with detailed accuracy, and I allow myself to brood on it for quite a time.

Then I feel bound to verify, so I get up at last to ferret out the book. The home critic in my house is fond of saying that if you ask him anything, the "him" herein referring to me, he jumps up and gets a book to look up something, but apparently, when I am asking myself something I am not so ready to verify the reference, as will be seen. Here's the book . . . I seem to remember that the picture I recall faced text describing some affair near Madrid. I turn the pages quickly as I look for it . . .

This is what I find. There are no pictures in the text . . . they are all together in a part of the book dedicated to photographs: there is a photograph showing three men standing by their car, and they are newspaper men, but there is only one of them I ever knew. Rather dashed I search the text in an effort to discover how I came to recall the man I met in France in 1918 at the same time as I recalled this war correspondent, and I find his name some hundred pages from the picture I had wrongly associated it with, in the statement of some stirring experiences of his, but not connected with Madrid.

Apparently what had happened was that that card of San Sebastian had roused emotions that surged over all the censors of the mind; a pleasurable experience Freud suggests in his examination of wit and witticisms, but one obviously of a charac-

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ter to warn us of the folly of allowing emotion to become dominant as it may persuade one that one is accurate when one is inaccurate, that it will offer things as associated which are entirely dis-associated, may present matters as parts of a whole when they are nothing of the kind, and so lead to impatience in the mind of the subject affected. And we have only to look into a daily paper any day to see examples of the effects of this impatience, namely, violent speech, perhaps violent action, and undesirable results accruing therefrom.

In other words, the mind strongly urged by emotion tends to imagine that things brought into consciousness by that emotion cannot be wrong because they are so strongly felt. At such times cerebration "o'erleaps the bounds of common sense," disdains facts, rebels against restrictions, even those of common honour and decency, and wallows heavily in a slough of inchoate half-thoughts and muddled feelings devoid of clear concepts and of power over thought or thinking. We have seen in our days examples of this sort of thing possessing whole nations, leading them to seek to rewrite the decalogue especially in the matter of expunging the sixth and the eighth commandments from the list: causing them to believe that a nation may lie, deceive, slaughter and harry its own people, and even let loose on the whole world insane war at the order of this strong emotionalism.

We have been warned by thinking people that such is a surrender of all that is fine and splendid in mankind, an abandonment of a wondrous birthright for a mess of pottage: in the citations given herein it is apparent that for many centuries certain of the better instructed among us have realized that such loose cerebration in the place of thinking is a grave disorder frustrating mankind in his march towards the greatness he might achieve, and yet we still refuse to train our minds as we train our hands, attaining our proper lordship over them. Instead we seem to prefer to drench the world in blood and tears, to injure one another, to rob, raid, destroy, rather than to think as we have been adjured to do all down the ages.

We feel and act leaving out of the chain the important link put in by Comte when he wrote his order of proceeding,

"Aimer, penser, agir."

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VIII

TALE OF A SECOND-HAND BOOK

LET'S look at something else for a bit. What about the action of emotional impatience on or in matters merely trivial, if anything at all in this complex life of ours can be trivial?

Mind, I am not suggesting that emotion should be trained out of human beings. Far from it. No one can decry the value of fine emotion or of certain emotional urges in the drab life so many lead and that so many more would have to lead if there were no yielding of minds to the warmth and driving power of emotion. But I do suggest that emotion should be recognized for what it is, and must not be confused with or mistaken for clean thinking. Also it is submitted that it might be wise at this late stage of human development to realize that emotion is not a sort of divine inspiration to action without thought. It may defeat its own intention if it is permitted to breed, in the one enjoying it, riotous mental impatience.

Once upon a time I gave a series of readings from *Tom Brown's Schooldays*; in fact I read the book right through . . . that book which has been described as a book written for old boys and rubbed into small boys (I hope I have remembered correctly the words of the eminent critic who said that to me) . . . and I knew beforehand that the audience of youths would be difficult. While preparing the readings I strove to saturate myself with the feel of the period: I recalled the first book by Thomas Hughes I had ever read, *The Scouring of the White Horse*: I collected photographs, picture cards, drawings, gossip, old talk and newspaper cuttings, odds and ends, concerning Rugby, both town and school: I swallowed local gossip and the history of the school and of the old foundation it developed from.

And so got to the job.

There are some books that are delightful in a way quite their own. Epicures speak of the bouquet of wines, and some rhapsodize about that same bouquet. There is a bouquet clinging to books; in fact, every book has its bouquet, sometimes as slobbery as that of the worst *vin ordinaire*; but many possess one that titillates the palate of the book epicure with a sensation as elusive and exquisite as that of a vintage wine of delicate breeding.

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Hughes, lawyer, Q.C., and all that, gave us books of that character, but I was made aware in the case of the audience to which I proposed to read "Tom Brown" that there was a distinct dislike prevailing not only against the book but also against the author, simply because he had written such stuff and that the said stuff had to be endured by those sitting under me at the readings.

Hence came the attempt to transport reader and audience right into the period covered by the tale.

It succeeded better than I had anticipated, and the question-time allowed after each session soon became a lively and very interesting part of the session. In fact, it developed to such an extent that the idea came to birth of having a box on my table into which questions could be dropped, each signed by the name of the querist, and then, if time did not allow of all being answered, those left over could be taken by priority at the next meeting. Usually, however, we got through the lot in the box each sitting, unless the question raised something the reader could not answer right off, when it was postponed for a few days and I looked up the point in the meantime.

At first a few questions appeared that were clearly designed to give someone a chance to score off the reader, but that soon died away and we had some of the most interesting times over matters of local history, old customs, phrases, and the like. All this has come back to mind now because someone who knew of the effort remarked that whether I was aware of it or not, I had run a Brains Trust in those days so long ago. I remarked that it was something like one, but with the difference that most of the brains trusters answering were not present in the flesh at the sessions! And because, prowling over the "bob" box at a second-hand bookseller's recently I came upon a book by this same Hughes . . . and bought it instantly.

It was in excellent condition, the binding being practically as good as when it left the binder: it was printed on heavy paper, came through Macmillan (and so one realizes that it was a book of standing) and was dated 1895. I've read it and re-read it: it tickles the bookman's palate seductively and subtly by its quality and its flavour of a bygone day, which has become a flavour enhanced by maturity, like that of wine: it is interesting also in its content, even to the casual reader. Well . . .

On the title page is an impressed stamp stating that the copy

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is a Presentation Copy, and at the top of the said title page is an inscription written in a scrawl of handwriting thin, spidery and difficult to read. The ink is fading now, fifty years later, but I think I have copied it correctly, though I omit full names . . .

"Mr. Churchwarden A. L—— from his friend Rev. Dr.—— with kindest regards. Christmas, 1895."

So my foundling had been in distinguished company in its time, that of a churchwarden, and of, I assume, a Doctor of Divinity. It had been a presentation copy twice in its first year of life . . . and when I bought it, its pages were uncut!

I wonder why. Perhaps its title, *Vacation Rambles* had something to do with this neglect, though a quick perusal of its preface would or should have set off that inimical impression. This foreword explains that much of the contents had appeared as articles in periodicals under the name *vacuus viator* and Hughes comments on that with the happy little story of the schoolboy who had just got into Latin and was not a little proud of his achievement therein. The boy, says Hughes, was spending a holiday with his grandmother, and she, aware of the lad's pride in his scholarship though it was but new and untried asked him what was meant by this title which she knew was attached to articles she read. The boy, records this preface, thought seriously for a moment and then replied, "I think, granny, it means a wandering cow."

Perhaps the early recipients of this volume were not preface readers, though. I admit that indulgence in the habit does get a hold on one, like indulgence in opium or drink, so perhaps these worthies mentioned shunned the beginnings of it.

Recently I was in a public library which has adopted the "open access" method of choice to its patrons. Suddenly I found that interesting, for I watched the would-be borrowers as they sought books. Again and again, a person would take down a book, open it and glance within, make a *moue* or slightingly shrug shoulders, and replace it. I am familiar with that reaction. Sometimes even the imprint will antagonize, or the set of the paragraphs will cause one to shy off, or the fact that there is no conversation visible on the page, or that there is conversation showing on the page . . . and so on.

But surely this is an emotion reaction, not an effect of linked thought. Many of these readers to be, sought books in order

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that their emotions might be stirred, or even taken captive, and yet they must have put back many a book that would have done the job effectively, because of uncontrolled reactions without due cause. Perhaps that is how my copy of *Vacation Rambles* came to be unread, and if so, then the recipients missed quite a lot of delicate enjoyment that should have appealed to persons of their standing. Apparently emotion may defeat its own purpose and miss its happy exercise.

Of course, everyone can't be cast in the heroic mould of Dame Henrietta Barnett who, at an advanced age, declared that if she started to read anything, announcement, paragraph, article, book, poem, she read it through, every word, with attention, right to the end; and she commended this practice to all who desired to possess a happy and capable mind. Clearly, she never glanced over written or printed matter: she read it. Well, if we cannot all reach this elevation of mind, we can at least use thought to direct even our scanning, rather than wait for an emotional urge to awake and provoke in us a mere shrug.

That sudden irruption of Mrs. Barnett into a reminiscence brings back her husband, Canon Barnett, as he will always be to some of us, and the impression those two people made on me when I was young . . . very young, I fear . . . and furiously determined to achieve.

Achieve . . . what? Grisly memories now strive to arise, grisly as the witches I saw in Tree's "Macbeth" at His Majesty's in that long ago: out with them from the picture: let the dead past bury its dead and get back to your theme. The fire of life burns as ardently as ever it did . . . by the way, is it true that Wilde wrote that the tragedy of getting old is that one doesn't get old? . . . Push on: calm the agitation that, like the troubling of the waters of the Pool, has raised a storm . . . *Soyez tranquille*, as I used to be told. Be content . . .

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IX

CONTENTMENT, AN OBSTINATE WEAVER, AND SOME WISDOM

THE last word in the preceding chapter is "content" though the paragraph it terminates seems, on reading it over now, to indicate a state of mind, temporary it may be, near to anguish : it seems that a rush of feeling has swept over the censors of the mind and drowned them out of action. What caused that spate of feeling to invade the mind . . . ? Was it that a few days earlier I had been reading Brett Young's lines about Severn tugging at the ties of Arley ferry, the Folly rapids, and about the recapture in one brief revel of

"youthful fire
And the ardour of youth and youth's fierce raptures ; ? "

If it was the resurgence of the nostalgic craving that I had felt when I read the lines, then it has pushed up in curious company, for I was revising matter written some years before *The Island* was published, and this last paragraph got itself included in the revision almost without my consent, and certainly without any intention on my part. Thus I get another example of the incredible store of impressions laid away in the hidden chambers of the mind, and that provokes another one that comes up like the accretions clinging to a bit of string dropped into a chemical solution in a beaker. But what acted as the string in this case ?

Why, the trite adjuration—Be content.

It brought up a whole series of memories many of which have been dormant these forty years . . . and some much longer. I almost wrote Alas, there, but could see no reason why I should. Why should one regret, or pretend to regret the passing of the years ? Each adds to the store of experience that is the rich pattern of existence, and without their passing there would be no pattern, any more than a loom could produce its fabric if it stood still. That thought of a loom is one of the accretions mentioned earlier.

In a street I used to pass through as a small boy enormously impressible with the hum of carpet factories lining the way through most of its length, there was one straight-faced mill that, I understood, had been built on the site of a row of weavers' dwellings. There was an entry at the beginning of the block, and inside the entry, a little way up, was a door just like the side

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door of the weaver's house that had stood there before the mill was built . . . if my belief is well-founded that this big mill had grown out of a row of weavers' dwellings.

I used to walk shyly up the bit of entry and look in at that door, which stood open whenever I was that way. Within I always saw an old man in shirt sleeves . . . I can't remember that I ever saw him in the "slop" jacket most weavers wore at work . . . working at an old-fashioned loom.

He never seemed to notice me ; anyway, I am quite clear that he never spoke a word to me, though I used to lean against the door jamb for quite long times, watching the fabric shape itself under his hands. There seems to be some lingering detritus of an idea still with me that this old man had been reluctant to have his cottage removed and his work therein ended when the mill builders had acquired the site, so his one cottage out of the row had been somehow incorporated into the body of the new mill, and he continued to labour on his old loom in the surroundings that had been his during his working life.

But the dominating memory that came up on the lure of those words, "Be content" was of an old diary, and some handwriting in its pages. I saw it many years ago : where it is now I don't know : its paper crackled under my fingers as I turned pages, and the ink of the entries was bronzing with age when I read in it. Yet I think I can recall the appearance of the page whereon appeared the quotation that comes into consciousness now, the crabbed, anxious handwriting, and the actual words of the entry. I may be deluding myself again, of course, but anyway, I will put it to the test and reproduce the entry textually as far as I can :

> "Contentment looks from a narrow lattice into a little garden bounded with a high box hedge : culture has the whole world open before it . . . "

I look at it . . . now I have written it it doesn't seem quite to be what I read in that old diary : there must have been more than that, surely. The name of the author from whom it was taken was appended, "Ouida", and her real name was subjoined in a bracket, "Madame Louise de la Ramée". I wonder if I've got that right. I'll leave it and hope for the best. But it seems that even as I administered to myself the trite dose about content, the antidote to it administered itself !

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Again I look over what has been written and now I seem to see that this last section is an example of feeling inducing, or being converted or developed into, thought ; and of that thought being followed by action, namely the action of reducing to written words the slightly nebulous imaginings that had hardly become clear thought.

The action went further than that of writing merely, for it was a definite attempt to check one sort of memory by another : the general memory moving in the brain being checked by a sort of visual memory, that sort of memory the waitress, I always think of her as my waitress somehow, in the café on the Boul' Mich' used in her job : a type of remembering that I have heard described as photographic memory which presents before the mind's eye a picture of a page of print or of writing, or a group of faces, and so brings in the matters the owner of the memory wishes to get clear or to reduce to accuracy.

If Freud is right in stating that we experience pleasure in allowing the censors of the mind to be put out of action and in allowing the inhibited thoughts to run free, and that we like doing this, then we have here worked out the formula of Comte,

"Aimer, penser, agir"

haven't we ? But I find that the freed mind, that is the mind relieved of customary censorships, usually imposed by habit, fear, custom or something of that sort, tends, as I mentioned earlier, to shy off the line of thought one wishes to follow on the impulse of the liking that has temporarily "sacked" the censors. Just as that mare of my father's shied from a drain cover, a bit of paper, or even a patch of shadow lying on the road. At that point, then, the will must come into action, and then, immediately we are up against that dis-ease Augustine found to exist in our conduct of our own minds.

Earlier on I mentioned a liking for reading prefaces. One or two pieces of preface writing come up in my mind now . . . and a sort of warm general amusement suffuses me as I recall Somerset Maugham's preface to the edition of *Cakes and Ale* that stands on my shelves. Again I say that preface reading is a pleasant habit, and then I get a couple of extracts from Galsworthy's preface to the *Forsyte Saga*, that may help in the estimation of the dis-ease that seems to trouble now even as it did

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Augustine. They may also suggest some direction for remedial efforts

Here they are, from a preface dated 1922 :—

"This long tale is no scientific study of a period ; it is rather an intimate incarnation of the disturbance that Beauty effects in the lives of men.",

and

"The figures of insurance societies and the utterances of judges reassure us daily that our earthly paradise is still a rich preserve, where the wild raiders, Beauty and Passion, come stealing in, filching security from beneath our noses."

The idea that the first quotation is complete in its diagnosis will not hold water, so that the second must be added. It brings in Passion which is more to blame for the dis-ease than mere Beauty can be, though on occasions Beauty may provoke Passion into life. Then, how are we going to develop the will control that seems desirable if we are to make ease of dis-ease ?

When I was a boy I had to use an edition of Euclid's Geometry called *Potts Euclid*. It had a lengthy preface printed in small, close type . . . but I read it, and re-read it a number of times. Its appearance didn't lure one into reading it, but it was well worth the effort, I remember. The book, by the way, is still a treasured possession, one of very few that have survived dis-illusionment and failure in its owner. I remember that the writer of that preface was arguing that power to handle the mind must be attained, it was not born in man as is the power to breathe, and it is a thing desirable and worth while.

This led on to the claim that the study of Euclid would be found a powerful aid thereto, and it was stated that many great men had so used this classic, *Euclid*, and did from time to time take a course of it to revitalize power when it was fading.

On a certain occasion an assembly of women gave me a jolly dinner (No . . . I am not seeking to parody Swift's *Journal to Stella*) on condition that I talked to them afterwards, on Symbolism, I believe. A lone male in that assembly, I felt a bit awed, not to say uncomfortable and the lady on my right seemed to be aware of that state in me so set herself, delightfully too, to make me more at ease. She sought a common interest, and so mentioned that her father was a Judge of Appeal. Like

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a spot of oil on a sticky bearing this loosened up things and conversation ran easily. I said that I thought such a job was an awful tax on the mental energy of the man doing it. She said she agreed, and remarked that her father, on most evenings during sittings, spent an hour after dinner slogging at Pure Mathematics by way of mental gymnastics calculated to keep his mind in first-class form and up to his job.

That testimony seems to corroborate old Potts. Perhaps I had better hunt him up; dig him out of the cupboard where books, leather straps, damaged crockery, and rejected manuscripts vie with others in collecting flue; and take a nightly dose, for the value of this mind power is indisputable.

Some lines from Pope's *Homer* come up again, lines that used to sing in my mind with haunting persistence. Pope's *Homer* which, I am credibly informed, was once described as a good poem but not *Homer*, criticism that rather queers the profound antiquity I am seeking to attach to the advice or wisdom I quote ... but it is worth while nevertheless, so here the lines are ...

"To crown thy various gifts the sage assigned
The glory of a firm capacious mind ..."

and I add this direction as to the use of the capacious mind,

"With that superior attribute control
This unavailing impotence of soul."

But even if the antiquity of this conviction of the value of mental power is queried yet there remains evidence available on the point that mankind has realized the truth from remote ages even till now, for in his delightful book on *Chinese Philosophy in Classical Times*, Hughes tells us that Master Meng said that those who exercise their minds fully understand their nature and so, understand Heaven: and that the wise have nothing to do with the excessive, the extravagant or with being exalted, and so deal with their personal feelings that they follow things as they are and do not allow personal bias to influence them, with the result that society will thus be properly ordered ... and the writer tells us that the period of this thinking was something like three hundred years before Christ.

Very well then, *en avant* as the impatient tourist said to the Paris taximan when we got into one of those notorious traffic blocks at St. Denis.

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X

LECTURING TO THE FORCES

SOME time ago I was booked to talk to certain of His Majesty's Forces, men whose lives were put in hazard to maintain the State and Government we have in our land. I was asked to tell these men something about the functioning of this same State and Government, something detailed and accurate. Yes : I knew what I was to talk about but I remember I was not at all satisfied about how I was going to say it.

Yet that was critical, and the opening sentences most critical in this case. The men were training for a most hazardous form of warfare ; they would be on top of their form physically, and I knew they would have little interest in "mardy dope" as I had heard some talk offered described. They were in a quiet spot almost surrounded by sea, they were vigorously keen, and I felt they disliked plausible spinelessness.

I had been to them before, you see, and I desperately desired to capture their minds from the first sentence.

I was due at their place in the afternoon ; it was high morning and here was I striving to send my mind questing for an opening, like a parson seeking a text for a sermon. All sorts of scraps floated up from various mysterious crannies of the mind and memory, but somehow they did not seem to fit the case. From Ramsey's Deems lectures this came

> "The ordinary man wants to understand plainly and to think simply about his rule and conduct of life."

I pondered on this, playing about with its words. I thought that if the first two words were omitted and the word "wants" altered to needs this might help me to approach the men. But I wondered, and then told myself sternly that if dubious, then drop the notion, for strong conviction of its suitability was necessary for me if I wished to "get" my audience with it. I scrapped it, and lo, another bit from the same lectures offered itself . . .

> "History is the record of the stages through which the initial disobedience to law has worked out its consequences."

How's that ? I asked myself, and I rather liked it for a moment, because it brought in the word "law", and I was to talk about law and laws . . . yet, that horrid dubiety still worried, and a mental

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picture of the men came up before me. Splendid humans they were, frank, fearless in gaze, athletic : I could see them fidgeting on the hard seats of their rec. . . . No, it won't do to start with fault-finding: we want something stimulating, in tune with physical splendour, and fault-finding, even by implication, damps down.

It was a glorious day of hot sun and summer shimmering in amber loveliness. I went for a walk, and strove to forget my job for a bit. In five minutes I was on the top of a cliff looking down at the sea. A long ripple unbroken for a mile or more turned idly on the sands as if it were too comfortable to move other than somnolently ; the vast space of the sea trembled like sequins on a robe draping a living form eager with life. I sat down on the edge of the cliff, put my feet on a convenient ledge a little below the crest and let my thoughts doze, or ripple as idly as the sluggish sea below me.

Kim came puckishly into my mind ; Kim, sitting staring through certain gates at the great world outside while he desired to indulge in linked thought. The parallel was obvious, wasn't it ? Kim found that the bigness of the world as seen thus "swept linked thought aside" and even in that detail the parallel holds, for the bigness of the world is sharply suggested here, and so, whatever I may feel I ought to be doing, butterfly thinking is the fitting sort for this day of heat and dazzle, this place of vastness and of the inconsequent glitter of the sea. Work ? Duty ? Let them go for a bit . . .

I looked down to the foot of the cliff, and immediately another vastness struck on my consciousness with a sharpness that sent lazy content to the four winds : the vast quality of the tremendous confusion of ideas, passions, hates, loves, desires, impatiences, that is roaring round this world at this moment : for down below there, about a hundred feet beneath me, soldiers, most of them stripped to the waist, are working on barbed wire defences, and gun-posts truculently defy the naked space before them to produce anything inimical.

Still, I told myself, it is very warm, the sea looks very alluring even if access to its seductive wavelets is barred : one can sit nursing one's knees and enjoy it from afar.

Near me was a bare patch gritty and inhospitable in appearance, covered with a sort of fine grit . . . small stones almost like powder. A curious fly was hovering above it. He was fascinating

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to watch, as one's eyes drowsed in the heat, he moved so easily and with such speed. He came near, landed on the gritty patch . . . and was a-wing again almost at once. Perhaps he didn't like the look of the human interloper sitting near.

He was the shape of a dragonfly but not more than an inch long ; he had a marked thorax from which his wings worked and from which his legs dropped when he came to ground, and behind this thorax his slender body tapered, barred with black and yellow transversely. He was a beautiful creature, but just as I realized that, he flew down the cliff face in a wide circle, his wings moving so fast they were invisible, and his legs tucked up close under his body. He merged in the haze and was gone.

Then suddenly, here he was again, circling round the grit patch. I didn't see him come, but here he is, suggesting by his movement an aeroplane circling before landing. What's he up to, I wondered. He flashed past me, but didn't swing down the cliff face this time. His antics swept away all drowsiness.

Apparently he had decided that the motionless human sitting there in the sun was not dangerous, and so resolved to proceed with his business, for he hovered over the grit patch quite near me. His wings moved with miraculous quickness, his six legs dropped as if he were letting down an undercarriage but he did not land. Instead, he scratched at the grit with his feet, his limbs moving almost as fast as his wings were doing. Tiny bits of grit flew from under his vigorous strokes, and some of measurable size too, such was the power of his strokes . . . and lo . . . he had uncovered a hole like a worm-hole and was coming to earth beside it.

He seemed to be examining it, and then, all at once, he was away again down the cliff face, leaving the open hole bare of its covering of grit. This is interesting, I thought. What next ? I was soon to know.

The fly came back carrying under his slender body a straw, brown and dry like hay, and a little longer than his own body length. It lay under him longitudinally, snug and neat. He landed against the hole, dropped the straw, and poked his head down the hole. Yes, he did, and wriggled himself into it for half the length of his body. He backed out, took the thin bit of straw under his body again and turned about. Then he tried to back down the hole, the straw with him, but it didn't seem to work that way. I suppose the straw, only a little thicker than a

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robust cotton thread, stuck, but anyway the insect came out of the hole again, the straw not in his grasp, turned round and, wings once again whirring incredibly, hauled the bit of straw back into full daylight.

Undoubtedly my fly was grappling with an engineering problem of the first magnitude in his world, bigger far, to him, than was the security problem being handled by the soldiers down below, to them. He buzzed about a bit, so very like a man who was becoming a bit hot and bothered that I could have laughed out, only if I did, I might scare the fly off and so never know what all this fuss was about, and I did want to see the end of the play . . . He was landing again . . . Yes . . .

He took up the straw, holding it under his body snug and neat as before, and came to the hole, dragging it under him. Now he thrust himself down head first, taking the treasured straw with him. He pushed on until he had disappeared completely : I waited, afraid to move my eyes from that little orifice like a worm-hole and almost hesitating to breathe lest I should cause some disturbance that would alter the run of events. He was gone a measurable bit of time, then I saw the stern end of his long body coming into view, and presently he was out into the day again, but without the straw.

And then believe it or not, he hovered about the hole scratching grit into it with limbs working at furious speed : he took special pains to scratch one or two of the wee bits of measurable size into the hole, just as if he meant to use them as road blocks, and he actually butted them well home with his head, wings going all the time.

Then he hovered again, once more scratching so vigorously that he raised quite an infantile dust, but he covered the hole so well and truly that I couldn't find it a little later on when I came again intending to show it to someone who had become interested. I could find the grit patch, of course, but I couldn't locate the hole, and we both felt that to sweep all over the grit patch uncovering the hard earth till we had laid bare the hole, would be a crime. The winged engineer had circled a bit after finishing his job, and then had swept away down the cliff face, obviously satisfied that his straw was secure from marauders, and who were we to give away his hide-out.

Besides, I owed him something. When he circled and then

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winged off down the cliff, I got to my feet with my opening for the meeting I was going to, clean-shaped in my mind. Both the fly and the soldiers sweating down below there in the heat were working to secure in safety something treasured. Surely? And for what else is law designed?

And as sure as I sit here, as an old aunt of mine used to say when she wished to be very convincing with unbelieving nephews, that afternoon's meeting was a jolly affair: the fly did his part well, and the shower of questions when we reached the "Any questions" stage showed that interest was awakened. What George Meredith called "morbific density" was removed from the topic I had to handle . . . and I had had reason to fear that particular complaint, I can assure you.

Once I was booked to talk to a crowd of those lively ladies in uniform popularly known as Ats. Not knowing precisely how I was to get to them, I allowed myself ample time for the journey, and so arrived somewhat early. I sat down in the hall of the great house where the girls lived. Presently I heard the sound of many feet moving along a passage behind a screen that sheltered my seat. The audience was assembling, I gathered, for I had heard such noises before. There was also a ripple of feminine voices making a lovely din, and out of it I caught this,

"What's he going to talk about?" with suspicious emphasis on the first word. The answer came in bored tones, "Law". Comment followed hot upon the word, "Good LORD" though no capitals are big enough to do justice to the utter disgust in the tone of this speaker, and another voice, eminently fashionable, even if it did sound imitative rather than spontaneous, said, "How a-w-w-w-ful" with rising note of shock on the first syllable, emphasized and lengthened out of all reason, that caused a disconcerting titter to run like a *feu de joie* along the passage. Disconcerting to me, I mean of course.

Still, I survived. In fact, we had quite a bit of fun that night and I went there again later continuing a series.

What? Did the Preacher say "Vanity of vanities" and all the rest of it? Very well, I've remembered it. Let's get on, like Mr. Bucket of immortal memory.

But, get on where? With what? Why spend time, so precious that it will never come back to one, prowling over books and over dusty memories? That query starts another, Why not?

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XI

FROM INCIDENT THROUGH STORY-TELLING TO INCIDENT

THOSE words "seeking a text for a sermon" stirred a memory that has slept for years, namely, that once I was accused of preaching a sermon, or perhaps, of trying to do so . . . and the whole picture of a series of odd events mixed up with it comes vividly to life. The events themselves had no connection with one another and some of them so dis-associated, occurred at times widely separated from one another and from the occurrence that led to the accusation, as I may still call it, referred to above.

I had come on a quiet Sunday morning under the arch of the railway bridge by Ludgate, and suddenly was aware of the majestic building on the top of the little hill that rises here. It stood serene in the early light, unhampered by traffic, unthronged by human beings, grey and convincing . . .

I was in a gallery somewhere standing before a Rembrandt picture, and there was someone talking about the picture, a picture of a philosopher poring over a desk whereon was his book, or parchment. He was shown as in a stone cell with small windows, I seem to remember, and in the background slanting across the chill of the place the painter had shown a band of warm saffron coloured light. The philosopher pored on, oblivious of the light, his face towards a stone wall if he should lift it from his studies. The speaker was pointing to the band of light and saying that Rembrandt was fond of that particular colour, citing instances from other works of the master to support his statement . . .

And I saw myself seated in a military car in December 1918, driving through thin rain on an evening misty and dim, towards a point where I was due that same evening. A colonel sat beside me, a protected map on his knees and a lamp of some sort in his hand. In front sat the driver, hunched up in his greatcoat, silent, watchful, his hands immovable on the steering wheel.

That was the first picture that came up on the words about a sermon and the others attached themselves almost instantly, and a host of others less clear than these perfect miniatures like a

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show in a case, tried to get themselves defined, but were obliterated by the dominant picture . . . that wet night of misty distances and the immobility of the car driver. We were on our way to the headquarters of an advanced force of the British Army marching up to Germany. The uncertain darkness thickened rapidly, and it was decided to halt and to light the acetylene lamps of the car. They flickered and died.

The driver said he must get some water, so we proceeded slowly, eyes straining for a stream or pool. Ah . . . a runnel going under the road. We stop sharply on the humpy bridge that crosses it, and the driver clambers out and slithers down the muddy banks to the water . . . and flushes out two boys !

They were thin wiry lads apparently somewhere about fourteen years of age. They studied the British uniforms for a moment as the headlamps began to show a light, and then became quite voluble. They even asked for a lift, telling us that they were going into R—— to see the *démonstration*. We looked at each other, for although we were on our way to that same place we knew nothing of any demonstration due therein. We took up the lads and soon extracted from them the facts. The demonstration was to be against a woman who had lived with Germans during the war : she was to have her head shaved, and . . . well . . . other indignities of a gross kind were to be put upon her by her angry fellow countrymen and women. They told us where the woman lived and quite an amount of detail.

When we reached our destination we found that Intelligence knew of the unsavoury reputation of this woman, but so well had the demonstrators made their arrangements, that no hint of the affair had leaked into our H.Q. The G.O.C. was somewhat amused at the lads, and he asked if, among the Irish regiments included in the force lying round, there were any ex-members of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. Soon he knew that there were, and he ordered that two of these men should be posted at the gate of the house mentioned, that certain others of the force should be on the beat, and that their instructions should be that people were to be kept on the move, and that there was to be no gathering of a crowd, or even of knots of people.

Knots of people began to arrive soon after this, but they were dispersed *sans cérémonie*, and would-be loiterers soon found that these policemen would stand no nonsense and would tolerate no

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slovenly obedience to orders, so the revengeful folk gave it up as a bad job, and filtered away to their homes. There was no *démonstration*. The boys, kindly folk may like to know, were handed over to the mess-kitchen for a while ; they looked as if they could do with it, and were then set on the road to their village with an injunction to get there quick.

But wait a minute, you may say, what has this to do with St. Paul's Cathedral, Rembrandt paintings, and sermons? Patience a little longer and I hope to connect up. A thought that had germinated in my mind when looking at St. Paul's, and when I looked on the picture I mentioned somehow got itself expressed on the night of this particular incident. I was to talk to as many of the men as could be got together in R——, these men marching up to Germany.

There was no public lighting in R—— and the town was not in good shape, but a cinema had been discovered where a large audience could assemble, though it had no lighting system, and was not entirely weather-proof in all parts. But it was certainly drier than the outside world, which was drenched and mud-choked, and there the men assembled till it was packed . . . to hear a tale or two just to while away a wet evening. From the stage the spectacle was weird ; a gulf of blackness enlivened here and there by the glow of a cigarette end ; rows and rows of blobs that would have been faces if there had been more light, receding into greater and greater dimness as the rows faded into the unknown at the back ; and out of this dimness came a deep murmur of strong masculine voices.

Something had been done to illuminate the face and hands of the speaker, and there was a little table on the stage. I seem to remember that there were candles on that table and that they made the fitful gleam in which face and hands moved.

From the mess we made our way in single file down a garden path, through a wicket gate, over some duckboards laid across some hole or other, past the house where the demonstration didn't happen, and so along to pitchblack streets . . . into a darkness that was oppressive.

From a list, the men had chosen as the subject, Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. On such a night, in such a place devoid of light and amenities, after experiences such as had been ours, and following on a long journey through country where

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we followed the line of retreat of a defeated enemy, the men chose that book of all the books listed. To say the least the setting was unusual, especially for such a tale. But it was weirdly congruous, and inasmuch as a tale-teller is very strongly influenced by the circumstances in which he works, these in this case had perhaps much to do with the shape the telling took.

I had the book in my pocket, a beautiful slim copy, bound in green, flexible and easy to read by reason of its clear type . . . it lies beside me now, for I got up and pulled it out of the shelf where it usually lives, and looked at the heavy markings in it by which I made it easy to see the passages I meant to recite, or to read if memory halted, just as I wrote that word "took" . . . and I laid it on the little table in the patch of hesitant light that so oddly illuminated my hands as I talked, and, apparently absently, turned its pages.

I told the tale as dramatically as was in me to do, using the author's words entirely except for the little link-up bits I had to use in order to get the story into the space of time allowed me, and somehow I was impelled to put forward an idea that had been with me for years. It had been moving in the secondary chamber of my mind all the time I had been talking and my active mind had been engrossed with the characters and actions I was telling, and as these came to the climax, that secondary mind told me, "Go on, let it rip", and so I did, hoping that these men, so silent and tense now, would carry away the idea, thus obtaining enhanced enjoyment as long as they lived from works of art such as books.

I was moved strongly to assert that the writer had shaped his tale round a fundamental truth, whether he was conscious of it or no, and that any creative artist worthy of the name did that when he got to work, or his labour perished with him ; further, that our author must have felt the impulse very strongly or he would not have made a tale of so gripping a quality and one that lived so long as this one had done.

I suggested that the truth was not always obvious but was worth seeking and thinking over when found, and by way of illustration I remarked that in this case the usual deduction made did not fill the bill, the one namely, that each person is a human duality, two possibilities in one entity. That deduction didn't satisfy because every one of us knew very well that he was not

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dual, but multi . . . each individual is a complexity of personalities. No, that was not the core of the matter, but this, that it is easier to pander to the lower or baser part of one's nature than it is to exhilarate the higher and to live up to that, and that each time one did indulge the lower the recovery therefrom became more and more difficult, until, at last, there is no getting back to the splendour any more . . .

And, there was a roar of agreement from that crowd of hard-trained hard-bitten men. It staggered me for a moment . . . and the show was over.

As I passed through the wicket gate at the mess afterwards, a hand reached out of the darkness behind a sudden shine of a torch and grabbed mine. "Thanks," said a deep voice, " that's was the best sermon I've heard for years and years. I'm the colonel padre", and the light and the man were gone . . . leaving me quite a bit dashed.

I had had no desire and no intention to preach any sermon, good or bad ; I had been merely keen on getting over my idea of the urge that causes any artist worth the name to spend his vitality and the hours of his life on the job of bringing into being some concept of his soul. The medium he may use, and what may be the apparent and immediate aim of the effort are secondary matters : what is important is to be receptive of the deep urge that brings the work to life.

I did desire to get that to the men, because it gives such added delight and power to the enjoyment of any great work of art as I had experienced on that quiet morning by Ludgate when St. Paul's suddenly told me that the designer of it had there stated something of which he was sure : that the great building expressed the conviction that he was dealing with matters about which there can be no doubt whatever : that it is a majestic statement of an impregnable faith . . . and has made me linger in my own belief, despite the expounding critic, that in the Rembrandt picture the artist painted in that band of warm beauty because he couldn't help it : because it suggested a truth that was struggling in him to expression, that the erudite may become so enclosed in wisdom and acquired knowledge that he becomes oblivious of the simple and mighty truth he thinks he is seeking, that he may so close himself in his cell that he is impervious to the warm power that floods the world.

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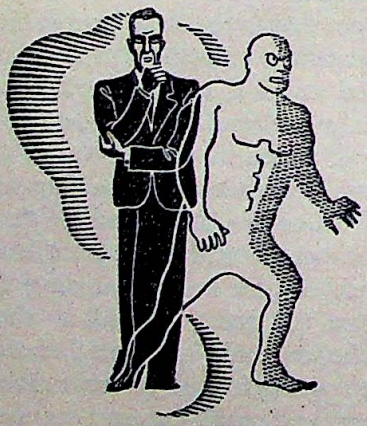
Proust writes about

"that part of the Eternal Mind that is the author of the works of . . . "

whoever the writer mentioned may be, and it seems to follow that each one is one expression or function of the totality of the Eternal Mind, and that the more appreciative each is to the movements of sections other than his own, the more ready to consider without prejudice or passion but with careful thought the tide of that sea that laps about him, the more exquisitely worth while will be the small embodiment that is himself.



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XII

ON THE ROAD

ANTHONY HOPE was credited with having said that all human beings are troubled with the itch to write, much as most are, at some time in life, troubled with measles, and, he added, most get over it, again like attacks of measles, while young. It was currently reported that he also added that for those who did not get over the attack in youth there is no cure. Many of these sensitive souls, that is those for whom there is no cure according to Hope, seem to seek other means of expression, such as painting, music, architecture, sculpture, or oratory; and some even in tub-thumping at the Marble Arch or at street corners. Every individual, almost, seems born with a desire to influence the others, or as someone crudely put it, to shove his or her nose into other folks' business.

And it is a chastening thought for the crude, such as the critic mentioned just above, and for the catch-word slaves, that this same desire leads to the giving of help to innumerable people to whom it is a godsend.

Many find encouragement in symposia, and many more in collected extracts from writers, but sometimes these collectors get a nasty jar. For instance, one of the foremost writers of our day offered this when asked a question about a certain faith:

> "I contemplating humanity . . . at present engaged mainly in killing one another and demolishing our cities, not only do not love them but dislike them so much that I hold they must be exterminated and replaced by more sensible animals if civilization is to be saved . . ."

Still, there is usually a set-off. George Sand wrote in one of her novels:

> "*Tout le monde a de grand défauts, et l'amitié consiste à ne pas les voir.*"

That's better: one may lift up one's head again after the blow given by the first writer cited here: if one agrees that while we have faults yet loving-kindness doesn't see them, one may walk erect and though "bloody" yet "unbowed!" as Henley wrote

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and thousands have since sung. George Sand also encouraged those who believe that mankind may learn to handle its own emotions : to subdue them to finer uses than that of allowing them to masquerade as thinkings and so to follow them to one's undoing. For she wrote, in the book already mentioned, when dealing with stormy moments in the mind.

> *"Quand l'orage menaçait de se réveiller dans mon coeur je le dominais"*

and if she could dominate her stormy emotions there is hope for most : she had many an up and downer in her time.

The statue of her in the Luxembourg Gardens doesn't quite suggest immense mastery over personal cravings : it shows rather a wistful figure drooping in contemplation ; one rather subject to a rebellious heart than mastering its urges ; the white stone of the work emphasizes the wistfulness, too . . . but then, the sculptor who made it may not have had the advantage of knowing that forthright declaration quoted above. Nevertheless, it is clear that she believed that this mastery can be attained, and that is certainly more encouraging than desperate calls to end slaughter by extending it to the whole of the race. Better to train finely than to exterminate, surely.

The book from which the quotations from Sand come was found in a book box and cost some two francs. In another of those boxes not far away was *Latude* a tale of dire imprisonment that is said to have given Dickens the idea he worked out in his *Tale of Two Cities* wherein he showed that a devastated mind and a broken life can be, by this loving-kindness, restored to fruitful normality and happy living. It is true that he does suggest that one cannot entirely escape the consequences of one's acts ; that one may ameliorate these only ; but even that is worthier the attempt than to declare, or to believe, that the only way to save civilization is to exterminate the creatures who have evolved it.

One is encouraged still more by bringing one's accumulation of book lore to the test of contacts with the multitudinous life of ordinary everyday when one measures it against the opinions and the doings of the hosts of sane minded people going about their jobs and facing their problems with steady courage and with so much kindliness one to another ; so much consideration.

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Someone was talking about the difficulty of getting on a train at one of the great termini in London, and displayed a plumage rather ruffled. An old man took up the tale. He was very white-haired, and he was lame to some extent. He said that he often had to join a crowd on a platform, and often wondered if he stood any chance of getting on the train when it should come in, but he declared that lusty folk who could have elbowed him out of the way without any effort, looked at his white hair and invariably helped him into the train, if by no other means, then by standing slightly aside and motioning him to get in.

He went on to tell of a day when the train he caught was more than usually crowded. His compartment had full complement seated, and a number standing between the seats. The door opening on the corridor was wedged open by lurching humanity, and in the doorway was a man of the Tank Corps. He leaned against the edge of the gap and talked to other men of his corps crammed in the corridor. He began to look tired after about fifty miles or so, and he shifted his pose with considerable frequency. At last the old man tapped him on the hip, and, having thus secured his half attention, suggested that he should take the seat the old man had, say for an hour or so, and that then they two should swop again. The big tank man contrived to turn himself sufficiently to look straight down on the old fellow. "Thanks," he said, "but I'm not tired, I'm only bored."

"He deliberately sized me up before he declined the seat," the old man asserted.

Each one of us is here without expressing or developing any desire in advance to be admitted to this race anathematized by the gentleman (don't hyphenate that word here, for goodness' sake) who wrote of extermination as a cure-all, but each one can, and I submit must, decide how he or she is going to use the span of consciousness one must endure. We have a plethora of agencies professing to help each one of us, and we have multitudinous brands of so-called religion offering us guidance to complete salvation and sufficient rules of living, yet we drift on, from one quarrel to another among ourselves, and by nations, among organized peoples.

So I repeat here what I've said before, and in many places other than in this effort, that we can get guidance that is disinterested, a very rare factor to find in offers of guidance, and

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encouragement upon our way to dusty death and to that glory that seems always so near yet so tantalizingly missed, by really considering and really appreciating the work of great artists, whatever be the medium in which the restless soul may express itself.

I know it has been said that the novel with a purpose becomes all purpose and no novel, so that anyone trapped into trying to read it cannot stick it to the end thereby demonstrating that it defeats its own end, but in answer to that I protest that I am not advocating that art should be pedagogy in fancy dress, to borrow a gibe from a famous author. I also stress the word "disinterested" written some lines above, for any artistic effort that survives for long must, whatever might have been the immediate stimulus operating on its creator, spring from some deep sincerity even if the artist concerned is unaware of its power and its influence on him, though I feel sure that in most cases the artist is conscious of the vital urge working in him.

George Moore in *Hail and Farewell* vividly expresses that belief also, for I remember that in writing of a painting by Manet he stresses the artist's consciousness of a human need and winds up by saying that the work may bring about

> "that spiritual crisis when men shall begin once more to think out life for themselves",

so that he thought that the artist was sensible of a lack in the totality of human effort, even as Mr. Churchill was when he posed his problem about the sinister influence in the world atmosphere that poisons every good and noble effort of the world's inhabitants.

Therefore, if we will but give real consideration to the wealth of evidence thronging about us we shall certainly find erected many a signpost making plain the way for each to that splendour of life we so earnestly desire but which, so many of us think, must be handed to us on a plate by someone else.

We read impatiently . . . a surgeon said recently in his own home, not for public use, that he read books that called for no thought on his part because he wanted to be taken away from himself merely . . . we walk through a picture gallery in impatience thinking that the appeal of works that cost weeks and months of effort in creation must be patent to a single glance :

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we listen to great music in the same way: and we consider problems of integrated individualism existing in conglomerations that make a pattern of activities so intricate that imagination boggles at attempts to visualize its totality, in similar impatience.

But if this is a fact established, then it would be wise to seek the root cause of the said impatience. Surely . . . !

My submission is that it stems (that's an Americanism that repelled when first encountered, but which yet appears to fit a case now and then) from the profound inability to compel our thinking machine to do that for which it is made and fitted. If one could force the mind to "linked thought" for long periods, tracing the separate threads that have led through the maze of mental functioning to this impatience, one would find that the impatience grows from lack of faith in the very thing the impatient one seeks to impose on all. And one might reach the conclusion that here is the cause of the craze for compulsion that is riding the whole world to Gehenna to-day. Somebody went so far as to assert, in language somewhat picturesque, that we are all, severally and in mass, bitten by the compulsion bug.

If the protagonists of an idea or an ideal are convinced of the value of the idea or ideal, then they should be in a position to urge their cause with such sincerity that it receives acceptance. If they conceive the idea and straightway seek to compel it upon all and sundry they are tacitly admitting their lack of faith in its value. If they try convincing and then lose patience with the slow progress the cause makes and so attempt compulsion, they exhibit a despair of the quality of the cause they strive to compel their fellows to believe in.

If minds are trained to think fully and calmly then any attempts to coerce those minds is a betrayal of the higher powers of mankind. If a cause is so shaky on its feet that humanity is to be compelled to come in to the allegiance to it, then there is something rotten in the cause or something insincere in the presentation of it to independent minds. These matters should be investigated in preference to jumping at once to compulsion or to the seeking power to compel.

Is there not a martyr's memorial in Oxford? Could ironic fate construct a more devastating comment on human procedure? Oxford exists to promote and train the thinking powers, and in the midst of it stands a monument witnessing to the fact that

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coercion was more believed in one time than the quality of the cause and its power to convince. One time? All the time, surely.

The Suffragettes resolved on termagant compulsion: in 1942 a powerful delegate body meeting in solemn session decided to press for legislation empowering certain employers spending public money to compel their employees to join certain organizations approved by these delegates: certain bodies of people seek power to compel members thereof to pay a particular levy: I remember an employment that made a condition of service or admission into the service, that members should sit in certain pews in a certain parish church every Sunday morning: Nazi Socialism: dictatorships: master race theory: castor oil persuasion . . .

These are of somewhat later date than the coercion commemorated in Oxford. But I am persuaded that all originate in weak faith, leading to impatience, and that the whole hell broth boiling up in us all is due to minds bemused by sounding words and by slogans, catchwords and the like, allowing emotionalism to pass for thinking; or in some cases to insufficient recognition of emotionalism as what it is; to the fanning-up of emotion by those who wish to trade thereon when it is at white heat: and I submit that this abuse of mankind's wonderful powers is possible only because of widespread inability to control and direct the mind as one can control and direct the limbs.

I submit that witnesses have given evidence in support of the contention for centuries and yet we risk

> *"l'anarchie matérielle amenée par la désorganisation spirituelle"*

periodically as

> "Swiftly the Politic goes—is it dark, he borrows a lantern; Slowly the Statesman and sure—guiding his course by the stars"

as Lowell wrote . . . reproving the very impatience we have been considering.

We must get rid of that mental disorganization which brings material anarchy:

> "We must get rid of the evil which causes our woes: ignorance whence emerge alternately despotism and demagogy"

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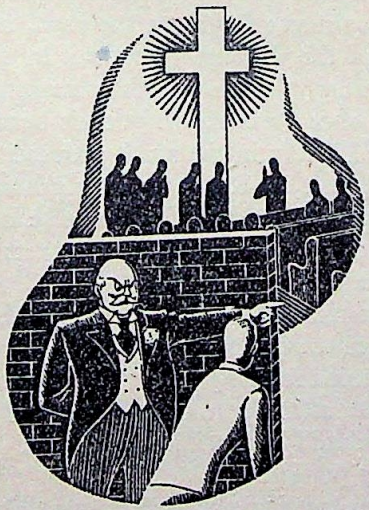
said Leon Gambetta in 1871, and in doing it we must remember that

> "The elements of power of a great nation are not alone its fleets, its armies, the wisdom of its laws, the extent of its territories. Over and above these, the elements of the power of a great nation are its moral influence, the authority of its reason and enlightenment."

That was written in 1846, and the idea there embodied has gone ringing round the world again in 1945.

Whence shall the curative power come? What about books and reading as a source thereof. Let's consider that for a minute.



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XIII

UNCLE IS NOT ALWAYS REPUTABLE, BUT—

THERE was a boy of some eleven or twelve years of age who had a master curiosity about the contents of books, who thought that the greatest gift of fortune would be a room lined with books from floor to ceiling for his very own and longed for the gift of tongues so that more and more books should be open to him. I can see him faintly now, looking at me through the mist of years : smallish, black-haired, painfully shy, yet with a certain power of dull persistence that was great enough at times to rout even the shyness. I see him on his way to the doctor's to fetch a bottle of medicine for his mother, and under his arm is a Latin book.

The doctor's dispenser, the lad had found out, was a considerable Latinist, and he had willingly agreed to a diffident suggestion of the boy's that he should give or assist in Latin lessons, that the boy might get along faster than he seemed to himself to be doing at the time. He must have seemed a queer fish to that dispenser, but he has never forgotten the man, nor his name, nor the appearance of the dispensary where, in slack moments of physic compounding, the two of them mugged up Latin.

When the lad once ventured to put his head round the door of the local Free Library in the small provincial town where he lived, he decided that he had found his promised land, his El Dorado . . . but only to be disappointed, as he found that children of his tender years were not issued with tickets entitling them to borrow books therefrom.

One day he confided his woe to a sympathetic, but youthful uncle who, I seem to remember, was not regarded in the family as an ideal companion for the young. He was not actually barred, I fancy, but the attitude towards him was one of strained tolerance well diluted with discouragement. Still, he seemed to be about very persistently.

This uncle, on hearing the lad's lament about the Library, at once volunteered to get him a ticket, with his own name on it, breezily asserting that once he had this no one would ask any questions about the holder's age, and that with it the lad would

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be able to use the library just as he pleased. The ticket duly arrived.

I am not informed of the method employed to get it: whether the festive uncle had personated the boy when applying for it, or what he did : the ticket certainly came and was used manfully . . . and, no questions were asked of the boy as he used it.

With the ticket in his hand, and the freedom of the place his to enjoy, the lad took a look round . . . and was appalled . . . by the serried ranks of books. On this nearer acquaintance they were overwhelming, and he didn't know where to begin to read, or what to select. Study of the catalogue made him feel worse, so, after a day or two of indecision, he formed the desperate resolution to start at the first page of the catalogue, at the A's, and to read right through all the books in it, sticking to the catalogue order.

Heroic scheme wasn't it? I seem to remember that the lad enjoyed himself mightily as he worked through Ainsworth, but soon he arrived at Chaucer. The edition was in more than one volume and was in Chaucer English! This was a nasty blow, but the boy struggled until he found in one of the volumes a glossary. He went back and started on the great poet anew. He found the writer something of a shock as he got on as he had been rather strictly brought up, but he stuck to his job and got through the neglected volumes manfully.

Later he bought a Chaucer of his own, and oddly enough, his boyish adventure therein brought him a few moments of glittering fame long before he did so, for as a maturer student he once electrified the lecturer under whom he sat, and the class in which he studied, by disclosing a knowledge of Chaucer and of medieval English that was extensive and accurate.

Of course he never finished his task of reading all the books in that dim, fusty room, for he was away from the place long before he had had time to achieve even a small fraction of the job. But the habit of voracious reading was by then firmly established, and has been a glorious delight ever since. The vivacious uncle did more than he knew.

Perhaps he is responsible in some degree for setting the young feet on a very thorny path, as some have alleged the path of letters to be. I seem to remember a famous writer of a bygone day, when talk of one George Gissing was buzzing about,

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loudly declaring that if he found a son of his taking to the writing trade he would shoot him, and that no jury with common sense would find him guilty of anything worse than justifiable homicide. But don't you believe it. There is an exquisite thrill in putting words together, in hunting elusive thoughts and bringing them to bay, in clothing them with fitting language; and in working in an alien tongue. And it leads one, even when alone, into such goodly company. Sometimes to odd experiences.

One day I went into the office of a publisher of law books for some reason or another, and there I ran into the figure of a big, burly man standing on one side of a table and facing the manager who stood on the other side almost in a posture of defence.

Between them, like a sort of Siegfried Line attacked and defended was an old black bag, tired and battered. Spewed from it and lying in an untidy mass by its open mouth were sheets and sheets of manuscript. The big man, and he was a big man for I recollect that when he went on one of those continental motor tours that were fashionable in those days, he required two seats . . . at least, if he didn't actually fill two seats he certainly so overflowed one that the next one was practically useless save, perhaps, for a living skeleton type of passenger . . . the big man, slovenly in dress, hirsute, distressed, was angrily arguing with great fluency if imperfect continuity: he fumed and made irritable gestures: he spluttered, while the manager seemed to be striving to be his usual urbane self.

I knew that big man, and his distressful moments. I had been reading with him for some two years. I had seen much of that manuscript before, for chunks of it had been shoved across the table to me many a time during our periods together as the big man learnedly discoursed on case law to me. It was the MS. of a law book the big man had published years before, brought up-to-date so he said, and now a good proposition for re-issue. It was the most amazing mess I had ever seen, and it was incredible, but that there it was in a heap before my eyes, that it should be offered to a publisher in that state.

I caught some rapid words . . . "But what on earth am I to do with it? It's impossible to do it all over again. There's years of work there, and I don't . . . besides . . . my colleague . . . I don't know what he'll say . . ."

The manager appeared to be striving to put in that no printer

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on earth could make any sense of the muddle lying on the table between the zones of conflict, and that neither he, the manager, nor any compositor had the authority to re-arrange or re-write what was therein. The big man dragged out a handkerchief to wipe his lips, half turned, and saw his pupil. He dropped his hand from his face with a gesture of finality, almost despair.

"Did you hear what he said ?" he demanded angrily. "Actually refuses to consider the book for a moment. What on earth am I to do with the damned thing ?"

I believe I tried to be evasive, that I muttered something about the literary critic who said that use of swear words was apt quotation or was indefensible, and that my coach had proved that for he had used the precise word to describe the condemned manuscript, but my little effort was not well received.

There was some other conversation, but the end was that the big man seized his bag by the nape of the neck so to speak, swept the MS. into it much as a road sweeper sweeps rubbish into his shovel, stuffed it well down and marched out of the office, I trailing behind. My tutor looked thoroughly dejected, and the bag hung limply from his hand. Presently he told me that he dared not tell his co-editor what had happened, for he had persuaded that young man, a brilliant scholar not long down from Magdalen, to give time and effort to the work. I took the MS. home with me, tied up in a bulging brown paper parcel. Nearly a year later the book duly appeared . . .

My old law coach is dead : his young collaborator is a judge : the hack who spent many months tidying up that MS. into some coherence is old and becoming memory ridden, but the whole incident came back with clarity not long ago when an old note-book wherein were set down quotations, citations, references, scraps of verse and all that, came to light again after years of neglect.

Looking over its pages I seemed to discover a certain congruity in much of the matter there preserved, and the old habit re-asserted itself in so far that other quotations have been added just because there seemed to be this binding thread connecting so many of the old ones, and those now consciously chosen to be attached strengthen the suggestion the others seemed to be leading to. Here's one of them spoken by a Cabinet Minister :

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"You can't govern this world by emotionalism. Hard thinking, great decisions and tremendous will power will have to be applied."

Thus Mr. Bevin, but what is going to become of us if, when we essay to do the hard thinking, the "mind commands the mind to will and it doth not"? We have been read two sharp lessons in a single generation and yet we allow our doings to be ordered by petty spites, our minds to be inflamed by superficial animosities inserted therein by others easily because we do not do the hard thinking; we canonize or adulate the preachers of hate as if they were the saviours of the race; we pride ourselves often on our slavish imitation of others.

Look at this, from a daily paper issued in this England of ours some time ago:

"No pep talk by a shop foreman can make the short bob as universally popular as Hollywood can if all actresses adopt it. The British Ministry of Health has directly appealed to Hollywood on this score, because, although the long bob has proved to be definitely unsanitary for the congested living conditions in air-raid shelters, the British lasses won't relinquish it as long as their Hollywood favourites wear it."

Lord Hewart wrote a book warning us that we are going in the direction trodden by so many other nations, that of allowing legislation to be superseded by regulations made by officials, even to the extent that an Act of Parliament may be thus altered . . . Look at this cited by him from an Act:

"Any such order may modify the provisions of this Act so far as may appear to the Minister necessary of expedient for carrying the order into effect."

We were warned of this possibility two centuries or more ago, yet here we are.

"The power of the legislative being derived from the people by a positive grant and institution, can be no other than what that positive grant conveyed, which being only to make laws and not to make legislators, the legislative can have no power to transfer their authority of making laws and place it in other hands."

So John Locke wrote, but can they not? See Lord Hewart's

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book. And it is only fair to the distinguished lawyer and fine scholar who wrote the book (it is called *The New Despotism*, by the way) to point out that it was written and published before the second world war came upon us, so that the usual excuse for arbitrary power, namely that a national emergency of that size makes it necessary, is not applicable to the cases Lord Hewart mentions. To reinforce that last statement I add the date of the publication of the book he wrote, 1929 !

Also, long before Mr. Bevin discovered this truth about emotionalism, a novelist, weaving a tale about a certain aspect of psycho-analysis wrote this :

> "Dogmatic convictions are artificial, not true expressions of the personality, and so long as they stand in the way I cannot induce that sense of peace and happiness I mentioned"*

and if the dogmatics are such as appeal to the more easily aroused emotions, the lower emotions such as hate and envy as is so often the case where dogmatics are concerned with politics where such emotions are so dangerous and most undesirable, *vide* Mr. Bevin again, how much the more obstructive they are.

We were reminded a short while back of something Disraeli said in 1867 :

> "In a progressive country change is constant : and the great question is, not whether you should resist change which is inevitable, but whether that change should be carried out in deference to the manners, the customs, the laws, the traditions of the people, or in deference to abstract principles and arbitrary and general doctrines."

This underlines Mr. Bevin, and it seems necessary to add to the urges mentioned herein that of bullying, such as the Suffragettes used or . . .

Well, what about this, reported to have been spoken in the House of Lords during debate

> "If you nationalize the coal mines you will offend the owners, which will not matter at all, but if you refuse to nationalize them you will offend the miners and will get no coal . . ."

a plain indication that when bullying comes on the scene we

* *The Camberwell Miracle*—J. D. Beresford.

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must give way to it, and act from fear, rather than from the impulse of careful thought. Is that the way to run a democracy?

Chateaubriand in his studies of history discovered that

> *"Les controverses religieuses ou politiques commencent ordinairement par les écrits, et finissent par les armes"*

a discovery that has some truth in it as we have seen in this last twenty years, and have had rubbed into us with bitter force.

In his history of the Regency and Louis XV Dumas writes this as showing the belief of Frederick II in regard to France

> *"quelque mal qu'a fait à la France la guerre de sept ans, le 'Système de la nature', 'le Contrat Social', et 'le Dictionnaire Philosophique' lui feront plus de mal encore."*

Here again are warnings against swallowing in emotional gulps the dogmatics, the slogans, the catchwords that are so much used: advice to do more than read or hear. "Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" is the better way, so that here again we come up against the need for the power to practise hard thinking.

We must not be led by the nose not even by the philosophers, or those who call themselves such: there must be an end of slogan habits in place of reasoning, of adherence to catchword abuse such as the use made of the words "vested interests" and many others: emotionalism must be recognized for what it is and must be prevented from assuming an authority it cannot support: mere sedulous apery must be recognized as out of place in matters of general import: we must cease to allow ourselves to be bullied when we should be asked to think out some matter: we must end that cultivation of animosities within the body politic here at home that seems to have such a wonderful attraction for second-class minds: we must develop the habit of judicial thinking, like a jury to whom the arguments are addressed, and we must not shirk the pain of thinking.

If we don't do these things we cannot hope for peace within our minds or peaceful attitudes in our postures: and therefore, if we can't get such within it is hopeless to dream of establishing peace without. We shall move steadily towards war again and again, as we have always done, like the confirmed drunkard who, after a severe bout of *delirium tremens* swears he will drink no more but yet does not take the necessary steps to eradicate the craving from his soul.

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It won't do to shrug mental shoulders, turn over and resume slumber, for it is the job of each individual to get one mind right, and then the corporate acts will at least have some semblance of sanity about them.

Yes . . . but how? That brings to mind again the man who did try to find a way, and I would like to tell something about him and his attempt.

But before doing that I would beg leave "to speak awhile" on the unintended congruity that seems to inform, or rather to bind into a mosaic whole, the extracts taken into my note-book over a long period. Perhaps it would be better to say that for a long time there was no intention to make a possible whole from the pieces collected, but later I certainly did add citations that supported the theme that I discovered to be running through the extracts already included in the book.

It began with historical extracts from documents, letters, old records found in muniment rooms, searches at the record office and so on, and later developed, in circumstances already mentioned herein, into a collection of cases in Constitutional Law.

Years later I noticed that these cases as well as many of the historical records quoted seemed to show a passion for liberty as against soul-less regimentation and against bullying compulsion. There appeared to be an intention to shout for the underdog, the minority man or woman : to object to the use of force in matters where the appeal should be to reason and to thought, and then it was remarkable how many bits one found in one's general reading that fitted into the scheme so discovered. It was as if the book of quotations I had desired to remember, or at least, to have at call, had developed a wonderful magnetism that made paragraphs, sentences, phrases in books and papers jump out of their places and move towards the pages so magnetized.

I remember that when we were very young we used to argue on "Is there such a thing as absolute evil or absolute good" solemnly putting our cases before one another in the rooms of one or other of us : years later I met a thoughtful young man who argued, in public, that all evil is the result of social living, living in groups . . . a mere facet you perceive of our old argument. The mysterious persistence of ideas in persons, places, and times widely separated and completely disconnected, is remarkable . . . and even while I am thinking on these things

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there comes into my hands a pamphlet that contains, among other things, these words of a famous medical man, under the heading "The art of living" :

> "It is necessary for each individual . . . personally to cultivate vigorous physique and vital personal health of body and mind, working together as one".

If he doesn't do this, isn't he committing an evil against himself, one that is independent of any social organization, I ask myself ?

The doctor also says this in the same place,

> "the freedom and discipline of the mind and spirit of man is as requisite to his independent and individual health and growth, as it is to the liberty and well-being of the community of which he forms a part . . . "

again an insistence on personal right doing as a factor in his own sane health as well as in the well-being of the larger unit wherein he may find himself.

I remember collecting and collating a mass of dream records for a great man who was investigating dreams and searching into the mechanism of the human mind. Of course there was a lot of stuff given to me that was obviously heavily weighted with waking thoughts and amendments, but still, even that had its uses, for it showed how fundamental is the love of story-telling, or the little vanity that makes one love to hold the floor. But it was most interesting to note how plainly appeared a sort of common factor in the dreams generally.

Many of the stories told of similar dreads, of similar dream movements, of similar dream achievements. Perhaps ideas are like birds of passage flying over land and sea and now and again resting in some mind as they go.

In considering the unconscious making of a case that seems to direct the choice of extracts into my note-book, I happened on this thought, and that sent me back through the years to the priggish lad who thought he would read through all the books in a public library. When he became a reader in the British Museum later on he often thought of that quaint resolve !

My mother told me he was a smallish bit of a lad with an eager face, quick grey-blue eyes, and ebony black hair. I verified that last bit once on a time, and am able to repeat the verification any time now. I remember arriving home at Victoria from

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abroad one evening, and receiving a message from the man who met me . . . If I wished to see my mother alive I must go to her at once. I went. She was speechless and lay inert with closed eyes. Then one hand that lay outside the coverlet holding one of the dainty little handkerchiefs she loved, moved as if she would wipe her lips. But it merely fell back on the coverlet. Save for restless motions of that hand she was very still.

The nurse moved away. Presently, after quite a long time it seemed, the closed eyes opened languidly, and a gleam of recognition came into them as she saw me bending over her. She strove with death, and managed to articulate one word, my name, in a whisper scarce heard even with my ear close to her lips. Then the restless hand made its feeble movement towards mine, and lay on it : the eyes closed, the slight tension in the hand relaxed . . . it became still, for ever.

I felt I knew what she would say to me : she wished me to remember something she had said to me before I went away, one evening when she was taking her evening walk : that I should take charge of her most intimate belongings, faded letters, carefully guarded little mementoes of the far past in her life, of the abounding vitality of her youth. I came across a longish, narrow box of cardboard tied round with silk.

In it I found one long curl of intensely black hair tied with a ribbon, folded into tissue and lying on a faded scrap of writing in the elegant script she used. It was dated and said that the curl was one that had been cut off my head when my hair was first shortened at four years of age. The sudden stab of anguish one feels, an anguish unreasoning yet irresistible, at experiencing such an incident is known to every adult, I expect . . .

I still have that box and its contents. And it reminded me of something my mother told me many years ago . . and that something will make me wonder if a prepossession induced violently into my mother before I was born can have had anything to do with the shape of my thinking when I gathered together these scraps that make up the content of my note-book : old anecdotes and records of the Gunpowder Plot, of persecutions of medieval times, odd bits about cave dwellers and riverside monasteries, the old law cases mentioned earlier . . . an astonishing hotchpotch yet oddly bound together by a sort of suggestion of a dislike of the use of compulsion instead of

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reasoning and in respect of matters which require reasoning to be applied wheresoever that process may lead, and the whole topped up with extracts from planless reading that led me to many an expression of thought made by persons throughout many centuries.

When wars led to such a profusion of noise about democracy and democratic organization of states, the hotchpotch assumed a new interest and the planless reading began to change to planned search. That was during the first world war, and it has continued since.

Between the wars the claims of various systems of society pressed openly and by underground methods, such as cells in nations other than the one professing the tenets propagated by the cells, methods that revolt all honest minds; the amazing misuse of accepted labels such as the calling of Nazism a system of socialism, led to the knitting together of the note-book extracts into a more significant whole than before.

It began to appear that there can be no democracy where any section of a community jumps to the use of force, whatever shape that force may take, to compel all other sections to its will in matters where reason should be the guide. And it became very clear that the base of the misuse of opportunity and of our time on this planet arises from the inability of human beings to use the most wonderful possession wherewith it is endowed, namely the human mind. It is not handled by its possessors as it could be handled and as it must be handled if the beauty and satisfaction of living are to be achieved by mortals.

We must learn to think, at least on things that concern whole masses of our race, on great topics concerning all, without heat, without prejudice, without spite and anger, without hidden venom against something or someone or some section of the mass; and with the cultivated power of steady, linked, clean thought.

The odd persistence of a factor in records of dreams and of a thought somewhat on the lines indicated above in writings from many centuries, led one to wonder if there is some influence lying waiting its chance to affect one, dormant, but yet alive, and liable to affect human beings in strenuous moments. Do parents pass on this odd germ, and without knowing it?

The packet of hair brought back much of this questioning,

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and revived a story my mother once told me about her young life as a wife but newly-wed, and a mother starting on the glorious path of motherhood.

There had been labour troubles in the small town where she and her husband lived during many months : there was violence at times, and damage of a horrid type : and during this period I came on the scene. One night, my mother said when she told me the tale, she was sitting before the fire with her two babies, one boy in a cradle, that was me I believe at about two months old, and the other lying on her lap being prepared for bed. He was nearly a year and a half old.

She had been terrified from time to time by the violence pervading the place, and on this night she sat anxiously listening to sounds from outside that seemed to threaten. Stone throwing, window smashing, shouting voices . . . but she hoped, almost against hope, that the mob would not come her way. She tended her babies, and waited tremulously.

The din came nearer. Nearer yet. Stones flew somewhere along the street, the trampling feet quickened, rose to a din of footsteps, raucous voices filled the air, and the sound of smashing glass came to her ears. Still, as neither she or her husband had anything to do with the matters in dispute she hoped nothing would be done against her home so newly got together.

The house stood on a corner ! Suddenly stones rattled against the side wall, the mob seemed to fill the world about her, and then with a crash the window of the room where she crouched over her babies came into the room in bits. She said, her breath coming fast as she told me this nearly fifty years later far from the spot where it happened, she didn't know what made her do precisely what she did do, but she bent over the child on her knees, managed to get a good grip on the cradle that stood before the fire, and to lift it so that it pressed the older baby against her body safe from being let drop, and crouching and trembling, to get out of the room.

She got into the garden, a longish garden ending in a thick shrubbery at the end farthest from the house. The night was dismal and damp, dark as a bag, she said, but she got to the shrubbery, pushed the cradle well in, then crawled in herself the other child protected by her body.

They, her young husband and herself, lost everything that

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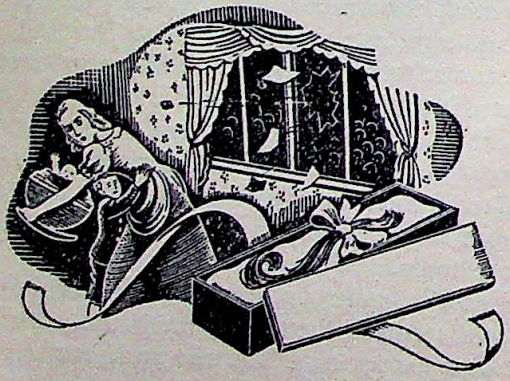
night. They left the town to try to make another start where the strife that had so drastically hit them was absent . . . with a few damaged bits of furniture, and relics of my father's business. I have wondered now as I look over my note-book if the violent feelings of the mother in those times have affected the texture of her child's mind and the shape of his thinking in more recent times.

It begins to appear that the mind is so complex a thing, and open to so many influences, that books and reading may, even if filling a man, fill him with bias, amongst other things. So one must train to handle the matter one obtains by this reading, apparently . . . and here I suddenly remember a saying of an old horse-breaker, heard when I was a lad . . . "Don't believe anything you hear, and half what you see." You take in books by the eye, don't you? However . . .



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XIV

DISEASE OR DIS-EASE

It seems clear that passages in books, arguments in speeches, slogans and catchwords deliberately used in attempts to override real thought, vilifications intentionally used to attain ends that should be sought to be attained simply by convincing the reason when it works in quiet thought, have stuck in my mind because of events I never knew, and of emotions such as fears of deadly force and passionate resistance to their power and the power that had engendered them that I never felt. And it seems clear too, that I am attracted strongly by and to the belief that humanity can live in masses, or nations, or communities (I am anxious not to seem to use any descriptive word here that may give to the sentence an appearance of party political feeling) without any one section thereof working cruelties and violences on others in the body politic.

I appear to believe that Sir William Ramsay was right when he suggested that living in integrated commonalties, or democracies, is possible, and that we have been shown of old how it can be done. That not only "being", that is existing, is possible to us, but that "well-being" is within reach. That the body politic must be freed from the disease, the blight, of turmoil and strife, of cruelty whether exerted by bullying, by strikes or lock-outs, by screaming insistence on one's own way, by misuse of slogans and the stirring up of ill-feeling for certain units of the totality in the souls of other units . . . that, in short, there must be an end of that wicked thing,

"Man's inhumanity to man"

which

"makes countless thousands mourn."

My note-book seems to suggest that humanity has been aware of the possibilities so near to it, and to have been striving to realize them for centuries. But it fails and fights passionately for little sectional interests that seem to it in its bemused state to be the beginnings of that intense realization that is so desired by all. It evolves wonderful dreams of the great thing life here may be,

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and seems to wish for that kind of life for all individuals in its huge compress of teeming life. Yet it doesn't achieve it.

Mr. Winston Churchill asks if there is in the atmosphere of the earth something inimical to the finer aspirations of its peoples: some ecclesiastics aver that the devil goeth about doing the damage we bemoan : one asks me if it is really traceable to Adam's Apple, i.e., to some originating wrongdoing perpetrated by some one of our forefathers ages ago, and working itself out in endless stultification that can never be avoided do what we will.

A great lot of the undirected reading of many years seems to suggest that we might well try one other method in our striving, namely, (forgive my rubbing it in) that of using really and thoroughly the mind with which we are endowed. Augustine appears to have discovered that we do not do this, and he offers a solution to the query, Why do we not? If we did, might it not come to pass that we should lose that impatience that is so dire a possession to so many of us : that we should cease to be so avid of slogan food and so readily swayed by it : that we should cease to be so easily deceived by catchwords and emotional oratory and writing : and that we should then cease to be so horridly cruel to one another as we so frequently are nowadays.

We should cease to be so clamorous for the "limelight" as we should know it for its true worth and should no longer slavishly imitate someone who has managed to bask in it in the hope that we also might get a little of it even if we got that little in some hole or corner where no eye penetrates.

It might even come to pass that never again would some tainted mind dream of a master race dominating all others and compelling every human thing to live as it orders ; that the craze for compulsion riding the world to-day would come to an end as other plagues have been terminated ; and we might even come to such a pass that we should hear no more of this "movement" or that one, this cult or that, mentioned with a sort of awe in the tone as if this thing mentioned were sacrosanct, a thing no man is to dare to impugn or even question, because we should see all such things as what they are, possibly means to an end, but certainly not ends to be achieved ; and the vile misuse of individual ambition that so stains action now would cease to have any reason for existence.

We might begin to see that happiness and the beauty of life

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do not lie in the multitude of possessions nor in the mere satisfactions of appetites for we deride the mind that, finding a quart of beer a delicious satisfying, thinks many quarts would be a greater joy.

It, also, seems apparent that mankind has been aware of these truths for ages but does nothing about it, in witness thereto comes this, that I saw somewhere and "made a note of" from Lucretius dealing with a man of great possessions

> "Sick at home he goes forth from his large house, and as suddenly comes back to it, finding he is no better abroad. He races to his country house, driving his carriage horses in headlong haste : he yawns the moment he has reached the door, or sinks heavily into sleep and seeks forgetfulness, or even hurries back again to town.
>
> In this way each man flies from himself, and hates, too, himself, because he is sick and knows not the cause of his malady, for if he could rightly see into this, each man would relinquish all else and study to learn the nature of things, since the point at stake is the condition for eternity."

I am not suggesting that possessions are bound to bring evil to their possessor, or this sickness my author describes. If I were so contending, I might find myself in the position of the altruistic person who was endeavouring to assist a man so drunk that he couldn't stand at all. The altruist found the job too much for him and appealed to someone among the bystanders for help, urging that the man was ill. An Irishman stepped forward but remarked, "Ill, is he? I only wish I had half his complaint." It seems to rest here, that the attitude of mind to possessions determines whether they shall curse or bless the possessor.

And we are back at the plaint of Augustine. How shall we begin to attempt to cure the dis-ease in handling one's own mind? It appears that I am being driven to the conclusion that definite intention must inform any attempt, that nothing haphazard will answer, any more than will that dreary determinism that suggests that we are merely creatures entirely moved by heredity, environment, and the past of the race of which we are expressions.

Now that brings me to the remembering of a man who did try to cure the dis-ease. Somehow the memory of him is inextricably

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mixed up with that of a Red Cross train, of bitter cold, of December, 1918, because then, in those circumstances, I first became aware of this man's burning faith that war and tumult are unnecessary, that mankind has the power within himself or itself to avoid such evil, that it is possible to live in an integrated society and to live finely therein and that careful training is necessary if we are to succeed.

We have seen how many there be who point out to us the weaknesses and inabilities of humanity, how many who suggest, sometimes by inference merely, what is required to mend matters and to get rid of the dis-ease (once again I venture to use hyphenated spelling because I find, the more I deal in words on paper, how the sense of a word can be altered and rendered more cogent thereby) that hampers the race in its struggles towards real greatness, and we find ourselves facing the fact that education is important with an importance we had not suspected to attach to it while we were confounding education with mere learning.

The last citation included herein speaks of the man with great possessions, but it is clear that the mere saddling oneself with possessions has no bad effect on one or on one's happiness possibility if the mental attitude to possessions is sane or sensible. So with many of the things that drag mankind from the eminence where he should dwell.

I remember a lovely little copy, pocket size, of Dante's *Paradiso*, which came my way, and I recall how deep an impression the opening lines of Canto I made on me. They form part of the daily stock of my mind.

"La gloria di colui che tutto move
per l'universo penetra, e risplende
in una parte piu, e meno altrove."

The music of the lines captivates : one repeats them aloud for the sake of hearing it : but the thought expressed is of great import. I have compared and contrasted translations of the lines . . .

"His glory, by whose might all things are mov'd,
Pierces the universe, and in one part
Sheds more resplendence, elsewhere less."

Thus, Cary, in his well-known work, and here is another, from

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the Aldine edition published by Dent in 1899, in which the translator's name is not given :

"The all-mover's glory penetrates through the universe,
and re-gloweth in one region more, and less in another."

I can't refrain from putting in one more, though again by an anonymous translator, but it seems to me to express more closely what the lines mean to me :

"The glory of his mighty power who all creation moves
Informs its every part, yet glows in some with radiant force
In other with the less."

This seems to say, as, I think does the whole work, that the possibility inheres in everyone of us, the possibility, that is, of achieving the splendour of life, but that some realize it more than others, though, if the possibility is there, all can come to the full possession and use of it. We deceive ourselves as to what constitutes this splendid living, and that arises from our inability to use as we might our own minds, the most wonderful possession with which we are endowed, because we mistake motions of our nature and wrongly evaluate them one against another. If integrated existence is to go on as it might do, avoiding the dreadful messes into which we seem to fall one after another, then we must do something about it.

Books may help : yes, as may many other agencies, but only if we use them with thought and eventually with wisdom, and that demands in us a certain quality of mental action . . . and here the man who has flickered into my thinking a time or two lately assumes solid proportions. Let's have a look at him.

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XV

IN A RED CROSS TRAIN

As I turn my mind back to 1918 and 1919, and to the man I mentioned a bit back, I find myself still a bit bemused by the music of that opening to Canto I of *Paradiso*, and still liable to be drawn into pondering on the statement of it. It breathes, for me, a faith that glorious powers permeate the whole universe, though those powers may not be used by all particles totalled into one thing, the said universe. Shelley seems to have had something of the same notion when he wrote about the challenge to effort that the lifted head of Mont Blanc, gleaming high, issues to all, for he goes on to assert that the power to answer the challenge is in us.

Well, if it is in us all, why is it not used by all? And can anyone wonder if I feel that the power mentioned may, as to one of its expressions, be identified with that of controlling and directing one's own mind in clear, objective thinking?

Most of us feel in our bones that we can't accept the answer of those determinists who say that our every thought and act are determined for us by the mass of living that has preceded ours and that which surrounds ours. We find that revolting, as we do the pronouncement of the philosopher who said that it is a calamity to be born. We are here and it surely behoves us to try to make a good job of being here. If we don't we mark ourselves as cowards. And that brings me once again to the man on the train . . . and the bitter cold of that journey.

I think it must have been in January, or perhaps it was February, of 1919, and the train was making its way across Europe. At the moment I now re-live it was approaching the western borders of Belgium. At the Ardennes the poor train struggled valiantly, but ineffectually, to climb the hills and had to have another engine stuck on behind to give it a push, and that, even then, the pace was funereal.

The coach I was in was a three-bunk coach, that is, there were three bunks one above the other ranged along the sides of the coach. I had a top bunk, somewhat too close to the roof for comfort, and with no outlook possible. My schoolmaster, as I call him, was below. There was an Aussi sergeant among us.

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I think he was an official of some sort, for he, I recall, had something to say to orderlies, and to train crews from time to time. He also spent a considerable time fiddling with an electric heater in the coach, in a humane endeavour to give us some warmth.

We had been three days in the train, and most of that time I had spent rolled up in the issue blankets in my bunk trying to believe I was warm. The great events of the days were the meal times, but they seemed to be woefully far apart. And we talked, but it is curious that, save for the Aussi sergeant, I don't recall the personality of a single person other than my master. That's odd, for I can remember telling myself that I would never forget that train ride or the crowd with whom I shared it. And I've forgotten them all . . .

I had known the man I call my master, meaning that he was a schoolmaster by that so that it may be well to write the word with a capital, thus, Master, though if I do that I run the risk of having him misapprehended as, perhaps a golfer or something of that sort, even if he escaped being imagined as a jazz band leader so often dubbed Maestro . . . Still, I'll give him the capital letter and hang the consequences . . . Very well, then. I had known this Master for some time, but not, as I now found, at all well. He was head of a school in London in civil life, was in the thirties, and, rather striking in one of his profession, the possessor of a singularly soft and gentle voice.

He talked quietly rather than aggressively, and, though I knew him in civil life, he was very reluctant to open his mind on the one favourite topic of the coach, namely, the problems facing each of us as individuals, and as units in a big mass. But at last he did venture some words on this frequent topic, and on the idea of a fundamental possibility, unrealized as it may be one day realized, that was inherent in humanity and in his attempts at high civilization.

That was when we were struggling over the Ardennes, as I said before, with an extra engine to give us a shove . . . and that was the occasion of my becoming aware of his significance. He lived near me, and I resolved, as I lay in that bunk and talked down to the bunk below, that I would see more of him when we were back in civvy street if he gave me the slightest encouragement. Nothing was said on that matter at any time, but somehow we both just kept it up. The connecting threads wore thin at

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times, but I have never lost touch entirely, and when he was promoted to a really big job in his line, as he was soon after he got home, I saw a lot of him, and heard plenty.

He was fond of asking himself what he was up to in his job . . . and occasionally he talked to me in attempts to answer this query. This education business, he said, what is it all about: what precisely is it and what is it attempting? And he quoted Hardy . .

> "Nothing had ever brought home to her with such force as this death how little acquirements and culture weigh beside sterling personal character"

But he remarked that though this was rather devastating at first sight yet, really, it begged the question, as it dealt with culture and acquirements, not necessarily with education, for though we may get education by and through culture and acquirements, we may not. That is to say, he added, we *may* get education thereby, not, we *shall* get it . . . and that led me to recall a farm foreman I once worked under, as a labourer at fivepence an hour.

Yes, that was the price, extraordinary as it may seem to us in these days of subsidized farming and all that. This foreman could neither read nor write: he was well beyond the span alleged to be the allotted length of life, but he was certainly one of the wisest men I've ever come across. He had a ripe mind, the firm capacious mind I've mentioned once before, and he could use it as cleverly as he used his strong brown hands.

Well, he was most certainly not a product of the schooly system and of its acquirements, so that he rather suggested that we may get and achieve power over our minds without going to any particular place of instruction . . . and so he seems to support my Master's contention. Still, it must be admitted that, as another author wrote,

> "We are not provided with wisdom, we must discover it for ourselves"*

and to do that we must acquire some education somewhere, somehow. Robert Lowe, Bobby Lowe of the politicians, you remember, said something on that line when, warning Parliament that in passing a certain franchise act it had made the people its masters, he added,

"We must educate our masters."

* Proust—*A l'ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs.* Scott Moncrieff's translation.

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Quite so, but probably we need something more than the M'Choakumchild education. That system, Dickens said, specialized in filling young people chock full of facts, bushels of them, and then requiring the said children to reproduce these facts when called upon, and he makes play with the disappointment of one of the principal backers of the system when it produced young adults of a type utterly different from that he expected to emerge from the school.

The acquirements of the pupils did not produce character, sterling personal character as Hardy called it. The Master I mentioned seemed to think that what you taught in your educational system mattered but little, though the way you did it mattered a mighty lot. He said, in his quiet, yet oddly persuasive voice, that you could use almost any kind of study so as to produce the fine mind that has long been associated with the education given by means of certain "humanities", as some studies in the universities are called.

I remember some things he said very well, because I was one of those people Midlanders derisively call "worry-crows", always looking round me for some trouble or something going wrong or likely to go wrong. The Master said that he believed firmly that most of the mental distress and most of the mental breakdowns or nervous breakdowns arose from this sad habit of looking fearfully around oneself whatever one is doing. He drew my attention to the Aussie sergeant and his electric radiator . . . and perhaps that is why I remember the sergeant when all other members of the party have faded from my mind.

"Just listen to him" he would say, as the man struggled with the radiator, a sad-looking relic it was too, despite the ingenuity spent on it, "he's worrying now what will happen to us all if we get snowed up somewhere on these hills. He sees so many disasters coming upon us in that event that he can't give his mind to the repair of the unit he is fiddling with. He sees frozen water bursting pipes, drenched beds in the bunks; cold food, the electric light giving out, and slow starvation getting hold of us all . . . even the precious beer freezing in the bottles and probably bursting them so that all will be lost."

The Master insisted that this muddle mindedness is almost a universal characteristic, and that thus comes so much misery into the world, so much quarrelling, so much impatient hate. He

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said that if all schools did their job as the job might be done, no matter what subjects they taught or what sort of places they worked in, the cure could be found in a single generation. Unlike most prophets and reformers he didn't raise his voice when he reached this statement. Most do, almost as if they didn't quite believe their own words and sought to convince themselves by much noise in the making of the assertion. He just said it in his mild conversational tones as if it were obvious to everyone and he were merely setting out an accepted truism.

I didn't quote Augustine to him, at least, not then, though I have been unable to practise such restraint throughout our friendship, but I did think of the wide application of his scheme. It seemed to me that the problems inevitable in our way of life would stand a better chance of being solved decently if we really could consider them in a judicial manner, freed from mean spites, from passions, and from the dreadful clap-trap that afflicts us so sorely nowadays. Then, I thought, we might develop the power to legislate calmly, with justice and honour guiding us, and might cease to argue in favour of making laws at the hest of any bully who may threaten the body politic.

And when this war broke out I began to see how carefully we had prepared so that it should come, by the very neglect of this sane method of conducting our business in the state, and as between states . . . and I submit that the old note-book supports my conviction.

Sitting on the edge of the lowest bunk, and as close to the Aussie as we could get without hindering him in case he should be able to get some real heat out of the gadget he was abusing under his breath and persuading with his hands, we talked over many things, started by this assertion of the Master, and probably dragged in as to many of the topics just from boredom or a craving to fill up time (it's astonishing how long a day can be when you have nothing at all to do), and presently I got him in reminiscent mood, though he seemed usually to desire to hide the fact that he was a schoolmaster, and thus I came upon the fact that he could, and did on occasion, behave in unorthodox manner and use language not exactly befitting his profession.

He told me of his beginnings in the work, and, as he said, what a mucker he made of it. But he assured me that "cheek" could carry a man a long way . . . and he laughed as he said it.

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He said he applied for work in London as a sort of stop-gap master to be used when there was someone absent from a school sick, but that after six months of that, he decided to apply for full appointment. He did, and was advised to go and see the school first before submitting himself for interview to the local managers. When he did, he found that conditions in the place were bad.

The building was an excellent one, the situation of it was good . . . but the school, as a school, was bad. The head spoke lugubriously of the place, and gave the impression of a beaten man, as the Master said. At the end of the interview he spoke his mind to the young applicant. Thus : "I'm afraid the managers will offer you the place," he stammered. "I'm afraid they'll take to you. Don't take it. It'll be no good to you, and you'll do no good here."

The Master replied that he would take the place if it should be offered to him, and the Head's comment was, so my friend told me, "Very well. It's your look-out. When you find you can't get on, and that the parents and the lads make your life a misery don't forget I told you." The Master said that no doubt the Head could refuse to accept an applicant he didn't approve of, but the Head grumbled that he didn't want any fuss of that sort. The Master said, "I don't care an atom for the conditions. I'd work in the mouth of hell if by doing it I got what I wanted."

I laughed at him, and suggested that this was rather startling language for so prim and proper a person as a schoolmaster to use, especially to so much more prim and proper a person as a Head, by hypotheses, or by definition, must be. He admitted that the "old man" didn't seem to like it, but he got the job and soon was working in the place.

"Well," I said, and I remember reaching up and dragging down a blanket from my bunk, I was so cold, though the radiator was doing its stuff by this time.

The Master actually became a little emphatic as he went on, as if he felt now that having opened his past so far, the policy must be "In for a penny, in for a pound" and he told me that he believed with all his might that the job of a schoolmaster was in some degree like that of a doctor inasmuch as the schoolmaster must diagnose the case before attempting to apply remedies, so to speak. So he strove to pry into the mental condition of the

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lads, and to see what weakness therein called for treatment . . . and what sort of treatment would be wise. To quote a soldier's simile, he said he didn't believe that you could treat every case that came before you by a sort of dose of number nine, or by the Mussolini trick of pouring in castor oil.

He offered me an example. He said he found that the lads he got couldn't write the simplest piece of continuous prose, largely, he was of opinion, because they had nothing to write about. Further, they had no desire to write about anything. Also, they loathed Grammar, again, said the Master, because they had never found any need for it : it was just hateful drill. "They couldn't read for nuts," he added tersely. I asked the ages of these lads, and was told that they ranged from nine to thirteen, the group being, he explained, what was known in the school as a "sink class ! . . ." and he remarked that anyone who had worked in school would know what that meant.

I thought I could guess pretty accurately the reason for the slang name, so did not press him to elucidate.

So, he said, he started in to improve these matters. First he read to them quite a lot, and provoked chatter about what he read.

My ears pricked up sharply at that, as one might surmise.

Next he questioned the lads about the streets they came through on their way to school, about the nearest way to the fire-station that covered the area they were in, how one got to the post office, and so on, and he directed their attention to the fact that they were never in any doubt as to the matter that was the subject of the question asked at any time because it was clearly set out in the words used to ask it.

He then devised exercises in written statement based on these same things, and was careful, he said, to make them of such quality that certain of them stirred observation. Others called for accurate memory ; yet others for some exercise of imagination ; and later, some that required combined operations, as one might say, involving two or more of these.

Then he made use of the well-known dodge of inviting them to question him, and after a while they become quite alert at that interesting game. But the Master declined to accept any question that was not clearly put so that everybody in the room understood what was being asked.

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He also suggested that boys should make notes of some of the questions and answers, and impressed on them the importance of doing that in such a manner that anybody picking up such notes would be able to read and understand them, and, he added with a grin, it was not long before little dictionaries began to appear on the desks. Furthermore boys began to query about writing such things as "They was" and the grammar lessons became less oppressive to their minds when they found that the subject helped them to write clearly and in accepted fashion understood by others, what they wanted to write.

My Master, as I call him, impressed on me that he got further than that, for he never had any difficulty over grammar lessons after this scheme got well going.

Anyway, all this led to a little scene that he described to me with some enjoyment, because, he said, the event so discredited the prognostics of his Head that in his own mind it stood as a classic of falsifications of the kind. I remember that while we were on this topic the train gave a sudden lurch that threw me into him with some violence and that it then stopped abruptly; that there was a lot of snorting by the engines with grinding of wheels and dithering of the fabric of the coach.

I remember that someone shouted through the corridor connecting the coach with the one behind that the heavy little engine tacked on behind was doing all the work, and another voice that asserted that the engineman of the front machine was getting down to look at the track. However, we moved sluggishly soon after, so my Master and I didn't feel called upon to investigate the foundations, if any, of these rumours. I'll try to tell the little tale in the words of the Master, recalling them as closely as I can.

"Just before noon one day an inspector came into my room. He was distinctly warm over something, and I couldn't be surprised at that, for if he had spent the morning in the school he would be likely to develop frayed temper. However, he sidled about my room in that exasperating manner that people use when they pretend that they don't wish to disturb you or to interrupt what is going on, and finally brought up in a vacant desk as if he were a boy in the class.

Every faculty of everyone in the room was concentrated on him by this time. So I crossed to him and asked him if there was anything I could do for him. He asked for the exercise

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books containing the English exercises worked during the term. He got them. I went on with what I was doing. I was building up a sentence from a word in order to show what adjective and adverb meant . . .

"The inspector looked up from the books for a moment, then applied himself to them again. But not for long. He suddenly bounced up and came at me as if he could eat me, a bunch of the books in his hand. 'Do you call this teaching English ?' he asked me, tapping the books. I said I did, and that seemed to cramp his style a bit, but he soon recovered. 'What ? Just look at these titles . . . "The other side the way : Volcanoes : A man I met this morning". I never saw such nonsense.'

"I think he had a lot more he was going to say, but I interrupted him and asked him if he would wait a moment while I fetched in a chair so that we could both sit at the table while I explained. He wanted to know what was going to be done with the class while all this went on, and I, very politely I assure you, told him he would see if he would be kind enough to give me a few moments of his time. He was rudely short with me, but I fetched the chair. The class turned to its books and I sat down with the inspector.

"I suggested to him that he was assuming that I was trying to teach something of which I was ignorant myself, or that he thought I had trained as a teacher in order to get a job and then dodge the work I had trained myself to do, or that I was a sort of 'Get-on-you-boys' master ; or possibly that all three fitted me, and I assured him that he was wrong in all. I said I did know what I was doing, that I had spent months devising my scheme of work, and that I thought it was a piece of impertinence for anyone to come into the room and to judge the scheme by five minutes acquaintance with it.

"He got ponderously out of his chair, pushed the books together and informed me that we would see about that, and out he walked. The school dismissed about then, and I sat at the table pretty sick. I realized that I had torn it, as we say . . . and I could see myself sweeping streets for a living. But I told myself that the street sweepers were paid a deuce of a lot better than I was, so perhaps it would not be such utter ruin if I did become one of them. And then the Head fussed in.

"He informed me that I had been formally reported for in-

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solence, and that there would be a nice peck of trouble come of it as the report would go to the authorities, and an inquiry would be held prior to disciplinary action being taken against me. He was such a picture of grieved anger that I couldn't find a word. 'You'd better send your papers in, for you'll do no good in this business. Better to resign than to be sacked,' he spluttered and out he went."

After some minutes of silence, and a jerk or two of the train as it got going again, I reminded him that apparently he neither resigned nor got the sack . . . and he laughed his quiet laugh.

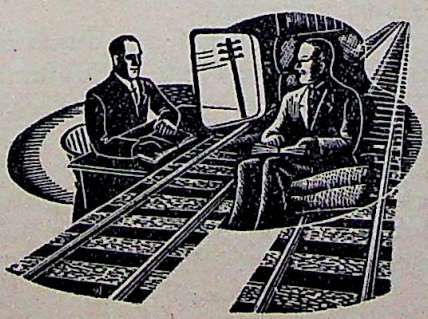
"No, I got promotion. The chief inspector came in to see me, and told me his subordinate had apparently upset things badly, and would I tell him just what I thought I was doing. He spent half a day with me, and a few months later I was promoted to a better job."

"What about the bloke who got in it the neck from you?" I asked.

"Oh, he and I became great friends. We even collaborated in writing a book or two on English exercises for schools . . . "

We both laughed considerably at that, and my Master became a bit serious, as if he thought I might get a wrong impression of the real core of the matter. He pointed out to me that he had not been impertinent at all : that he had been right in his contention about judging work on superficial glances at it : that the inspector had seemed to think it impossible for a master to be in deadly earnest in his job : that all masters were work-dodgers and that it was an inspector's job to catch 'em out : and that teachers ceased to be men when once they started class teaching.

I remember that he slewed himself round at that and tapped my knee . . . "And he was impertinent, damned impertinent," he said, and then lolled back on the bunk as if that ended it.



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XVI

WHAT IS THIS EDUCATION BUSINESS?

Of course, I might have lost sight of the Master from the moment we stepped off the train at Calais, except for the mere good mornings of the casual acquaintance regularly met, or I might, like so many who become interested in things not immediately their concern have become enmeshed in the routine of everyday so that I let the wartime intimacy die altogether, but there had come up in our talks so much in which I had a strong interest from long reading and the exploration of others men's thoughts, that somehow he and I seemed to coalesce mechanically.

For instance, he told me that he believed that the first function of education was to develop in the pupil the power to direct and control his or her own mentality: that the mere mastery of subjects or bits of subjects or the acquisition of certain skills in certain processes was not the end of education but the means whereby one achieved the greater object: and he insisted (and here I recall how convincing that insistence, in his soft voice devoid of all emphatics, became by the very force of its quietness) that there would be a tremendous increase in the individual happiness of the whole world if this power were developed thoroughly because so much misery arises from the muddle mindedness it would remove, and so many nervous breakdowns come from the muddle mindedness that is prevalent that the cure of it would be as great an achievement as Lister's discovery of antiseptics.

As there was this strong bond of common interest between us one naturally resolved that the friendship should persist and that these ideas should not be allowed to moulder into waste when everyday life should be resumed.

Apparently my Master had talked to others in the strain he used in his talks with me, for a little while after he resumed his professional life, he was asked by a very highly-placed person in the educational world to read a paper before the British Association for the Advancement of Science on these same contentions he had put forward to me. The result of that was his appointment to another school very near where we lived, so now the match *was* laid to the train and the pair of us hobnobbed as two

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eccentric folk will. That he was regarded as an eccentric, a man with a bee in his bonnet is clear from what a colleague said to him when he was appointed to this latest post . . . "Ah, well. That's another charlatan out of the way, so now there's only me left and they must surely do something for me next."

When he took over his new school he started off something like this, at morning assembly on his first day at work there . . . "When I came in here this morning I saw a policeman standing on the corner outside. What a comment on education, a policeman just outside a school. Why, in a really educated people there should never be such a thing as a policeman, unless as a person to tell people the way to the next street, or to guide the traffic. Policemen and prisons in a civilized state are just evidences that we have failed to do our job, that we are not really civilized at all, only playing at it."

Years after, actually during the last war, one of the boys present at that assembly told me of this oration and said how comic it appeared to them then, but how very real it had since become to him personally. The Master had gone on to explain that the only way to get rid of police and prisons was to make them unnecessary, by our general conduct. Well, well!

Later he explained that the school was a little world in itself, and that he considered that it should show the big world outside how it could run without policemen and all the rest of it, and he reminded them that they were a group of some five hundred boys brought together in an area that was residential, and closely built up. He suggested that they should so come and go, day in day out, that no single person in the whole area would be an atom the worse for their coming together and their dispersal. "Talk," he said, "don't shout." "Walk or run but avoid rushing. You come here to do a certain job. Do it, and when you have trained those brains that brought you here, use them."

He told me that he strove to give the lads "Do's, rather than don'ts", but it was clear to me that he was absolutely determined to train in his boys the power to handle their own minds, to master them and to make them do what they were told to do. He said again and again that he was certain that this developed power over one's mind was the essence of culture, and that culture could be gotten by studies such as were carried on in his school, modern studies and especially study of English literature

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and art, just as effectively as by the study of ancient philosophies and dead languages.

He stressed the fact that the greatest beauties were available to all free . . . except the mind to appreciate, which must be cultivated at some pains. I remember that he instanced the beauty of the sky and its cloudscapes, vegetation, trees, and open spaces where the wind blows free . . . "Have you realized," I remember his saying, "that even in this thickly built-up area there is scarcely any street you can look down without seeing a tree or two ? "

The age range of his boys was from just under twelve to about seventeen, and that fact stirred him greatly, and led him to say that the taking of responsibility was the making of a human being, and the carrying of it wisely and well, the coping-stone of the human edifice. He told me that when he was suddenly betrayed into a disquisition on the "Do and don't theory" as he called it.

He said that it seemed to him that if we say "Don't", we somehow take the responsibility, but that if we say "Do" we put the responsibility on the other, where it belongs. "I can't explain how it is that it seems to me to be that way, but yet I feel convinced that there is a subtle difference between the two suggestions, or commands it you prefer that word as a description of the process, that has the effect I feel. And I want these lads to have that refining influence, or experience, of taking responsibility". That's how he wound up his talk, and seemed quite content to leave the matter there.

I remember that later on he recalled this talk, and informed me that with some years of watchful experience of his method and its effect on himself as well as on his lads, he was convinced that the "Do" adjuration usually warmed the recipient of it towards the act desired as well as in his whole make-up, whereas the "Don't" command generally woke some animus in the subject of it, or even an instinctive resistance.

He admitted that you had to have some Don'ts, though. "But", he said, "let 'em be as few as possible. Starve yourself of Don'ts." I, having been one of a large family brought up in the Victorian tradition, thought that I could have told him a bit about the reactions of children to the everlasting Don't, but reflection warned me that it was not for me to teach a tailor to

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sew, so I held my peace. I can't go through this man's practice step by step and indicate in detail how he did the work that did attract so much attention as his certainly did because I don't know enough about the mystery or calling of pedagogue, but the few bits I came across seemed clear in their intention, and most certainly considerable success did attend his efforts, and equally certainly, that success was noted and talked about in places where, most teachers would think, their work never received a thought. Let me give an example which came to my own knowledge direct.

After my Master had been in this school of which I have been writing here, it was said in the neighbourhood that he was likely to leave, to get further promotion. I was with him one day, in a street as he walked home and we met one of the local public men . . . the mayor of the borough as a matter of fact. His Worship plunged into the matter of this master's leaving without more preliminary than a brief, "How do!" "It's not really true, is it? You're not going, are you?" "I don't know exactly what is afoot yet," said the Master, "but I don't think it likely that I shall go, at any rate, yet." "Don't go at all," the Mayor said decidedly. "The change you have made in that horde of boys in your school is amazing. The whole neighbourhood has improved out of knowledge though few of your boys come from it. I live near, as you may know, and we all should think it a calamity if you went."

I remember that the Master thanked the Mayor for his outspoken compliment, which remark caused the good citizen to fidget and stammer and when he moved away the Master said seriously, in that soft voice that always brought back to me vividly the Red Cross train, its bunks, the Aussi and his electric heater that merely succeeded in making the bitter weather more obvious, and all the rest of those campaigning days muddled in the background like an unclear back cloth on a stage . . . I seem to be losing my way in all this . . . well, the Master said that he had been offered another job, but that he was very undecided about it, as he wanted to see several generations through the school before he gave up close contact with it, and that he hadn't seen one through yet.

I discovered that by a generation he meant one year's intake of boys completing the full course of five years. So he would

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have to be there five years in order to see his first intake work through, and by that time he would have several more intakes on his hands, at various stages of the journey, so that there seemed no end to his job in that school. He laughed wryly, commenting, "Sort of penal servitude for life, eh?" Anyway, he didn't leave, so perhaps the Mayor thought his plea was answered as he wished it to be answered.

I once or twice looked through the school visitor's book, and was amazed to notice that the signatures covered the globe. That was just before this last war hit us all. My statement is no exaggeration at all, either. Visitors had come from China, Japan, Manchuria, Canada, South Africa, Australia, U.S.A., New Zealand, Guiana, Penang, Ceylon: from Norway, Iceland, Denmark: from France (in squads once or twice), Germany (again squads): from great offices, from the services, from education authorities all over this country . . .

I commented to him on this extraordinary collection of signatures and he warned me that these visitors had not travelled to the school from their various locations as of set intent, but that very often they were in the country from abroad on some inquiry or other and had been offered cards to visit the school among others. He told me this: "A group of Japanese naval officers were in England on some sort of courtesy visit, and had asked the Admiralty whether the production in human beings of what they called the English character was the result of deliberate training to that end, or was it inborn, or a mere accident.

"The Admiralty suggested they should go to the Board of Education, and gave them an introduction to it. There they had discussed their query, and were then offered a list of educational institutions they were advised to visit. Among these was this school. That's how most of these visitors came to visit us . . . in that sort of way, I mean. I have had a few direct visits due to to something some other visitor has said when he has got back home, but they are rare. I've had big nobs from universities, professors of education, psychologists from all sorts of places, but poking about these places is their job, isn't it . . . and once or twice the Classical Association has been here in the person of one or two of its members, but they were people I knew."

I professed myself edified by this elucidation, and the Master laughed. "Well," he said, "there's one thing about it that amuses

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me a lot and that is that so many of the visitors ask me to return the call. I am almost pestered to go to Germany : I am offered amazing hospitality in Virginia : the chap from Mukden has written me more than once to remind me of his pressing invitation to his place : so the Penang man, too . . . I could almost work a tour round the world by accepting a judiciously selected assortment of the invitations . . . and I believe I could spend a year gadding about in India, Burma, and Ceylon . . ." His deprecatory little laugh disarmed criticism . . . and he shut the book. Let's leave it at that.

On looking over those last two paragraphs certain reflections obtrude. In them I have striven to reproduce the very words of the man I profess to quote, and I claim to have succeeded fairly well in spite of the long time that has elapsed since he talked with me. But the disturbing thoughts will press for consideration. Am I here pretending that I have met and talked with some sort of superman ? I do sincerely hope that I have not given any such impression. The man is, as he insists himself, a common, ordinary, everyday human thing, but interested in mankind and its millions of years of effort. Thus far the Master himself.

I beg leave to add somewhat of my own. I know him to be capable of becoming a bore : he does get so persistent on his ideas at times : he sometimes, as one said to him once, talks the hind leg off a brass monkey, and yet, he has that delightful gift of silence that a famous author described as a precious thing : on most matters he is diffident to a degree, though he pursues his main aim with almost savage determination. He has tried many things and various ways of life, only to fail in most of these efforts, but he says he believes not one of them has been a total loss, as every experience has had its value.

He likes games and manages to play some of them rather badly . . . others he watches : he walks miles on end with a purposeful stride, though he is going nowhere, but he loves the open and the feel of turf under his feet, and his walks usually put him on it before he has been going long. He once let me know that he had at one time ambitions in the amateur boxing line, but that this was all well and truly beaten out of him by the time he was twenty-one. Very well then !

Next, one of these obtrusive reflections tells me that I may be accused of imitating, feebly and afar off, the celebrated work,

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Sartor Resartus, and of trifling behind a sort of Teufelsdrockh, professor of things in general of the university of Nobody-knows-where. I am not doing anything of the sort. I am writing of a very real being. I'll go the whole hog now that I am on this topic, and let out other facts I know of my Master . . .

His oddities have brought him other invitations than those mentioned above. For instance, he was at one time invited into the inner counsels of two of the great political parties : he had been offered an uncontested seat on his borough council : pressed to become a candidate for the County Council : twice asked to stand for Parliament ! He admits that he felt a warm sensation of pleasure at these incidents, but he asserts that teachers and parsons should never become active in party politics or openly allied with party activities because he feels that in so doing they make all their teaching suspect ; at any rate, they thereby raise a feeling, in the minds of those they must strive to influence, that is inimical.

Moreover, he holds, or held, that such activities tend to undermine one's own sincerity, the one quality that is indispensable if their work is to be what it might be. Especially is this so if one indulges in surreptitious activities of the sort. Therefore he holds that such people must make a choice, either political activity or their job : one or the other : no playing with both . . . and so he is not and never has been a councillor, or a candidate for Parliament, or any sort of big noise in any political organization, though he has taken considerable interest in housing problems in his own area.

Now let's get on with the job, remembering that the difference between one who does get somewhere in his work and one who does not is that the inner man of the one has been fostered into generous development by favourable influences, as Carlyle says, but that of the other has been crushed down, perhaps by vigour of animal digestion, and sleeps stagnant in the bottom of his stomach, so that a fitting modesty, despite appearances, may be allowed to my Master . . . inasmuch as this dictum seems to show that any success he achieved or recognition he received was due to "favourable influences" so that he cannot be accused of unwarrantable boasting, and neither can I for apparent pride in having known the man.

Of course, such an admission may be more reprehensible than

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even the most indecent boasting in these days of high civilization when swaggering self-assertion, clamorous insistence on one's own wisdom and supreme ability, and childish bragging seem to be the necessary qualifications for high office, for public trust, and for interfering with everybody's business . . . and ruthless selfishness, either sectional or individual, or both, appears to be the high mark of human development most applauded in this wonderful world of . . . what? . . . Progress, of course!

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XVII

EXPERIMENTS WITH MENTAL DYNAMITE

BUT I wanted to tell you about some of the oddities of my Master, because all of them seemed to me, perhaps because of the bee in my bonnet, to aim at producing in his pupils the very power I have been suggesting we ought to develop in all human beings. I am not sufficiently up in the mysteries of his craft to discuss his work as a whole, as one of those supreme persons called Inspectors of Schools could do, though I can thoroughly appreciate any oddity apparent in his practice, as, I hope will appear as we go on. We have seen . . . I seem to be using Karl Marx's style of arguing . . . That won't do here, so let's start again.

My Master told me again and again of the great interest all his masters took in his ideas and his organization, and how thoroughly they entered into the spirit of his work and attempts, so that they were constantly developing ideas leading in the way the school was trying to go, and in working them out unselfishly, unsparingly in effort and time, and with unusual skill, and he claimed that many of those things I called oddities and that he called the very soul of reality in education, originated in some member or members of his staff, and were worked out by those members or that member.

One of his oddities was a deep faith in singing, and he obtained a master who was an outstanding musician and a recognized teacher of singing. Somehow he never seemed to lack someone of that sort though as masters went and came he didn't always secure a man of the standing of this man I have now in mind. Well, he and that master talked of the morning service which opened school every day, and the outcome was the development of a short musical event of unusual quality.

A psalm was sung, softly and beautifully, a hymn also, and the prayer was also intoned, slowly and thoughtfully. That deliberation the Master insisted on, and rubbed it in that everybody taking part must mean every word he said. The intoning was used to prevent gabbling, as the instrumental accompaniment on the organ (an instrument the school bought for itself) set the pace and the musician dominated that. I was told by

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someone who lived near the school that it soon became a regular practice among the residents of the neighbourhood, to open their windows whatever the weather, to listen to this brief service sung by these five hundred boys.

Towards the first Christmas the musician, who seems to have had encyclopaedic knowledge on his subject, mentioned carols.

The Master was on it like a shot. He soon extended the idea. He remarked that if Magdalen could have singing from the top of the tower on Mayday, why could not this school have carols in the playground on the eve of Christmas. The neighbourhood was built-up, congested and more than a bit dingy, therefore more reason for such a thing if well done. The musician provided the loveliest carols he could lay hands on, and work was begun... and soon, a lady singer who heard of the idea, volunteered to help if her aid could be of service. She was cast to sing the solo parts of one or two carols requiring solo, and enthusiastically joined the little band of boys. Not a word of this leaked out in the neighbourhood simply because nobody knew what the carol practice was for except the masters concerned and the lady.

So it was done. From the corner of the playground abutting on the main road, suddenly, about eight of the clock on the Eve of Christmas, notes of a piano sounded. The playground was absolutely dark, so it was useless for people to stub their noses on the gate in trying to see what was going on... and then came the old, old carols... one after another...

I was told that the crowd that gathered stopped the trams and buses going upon their lawful occasions, until police arrived and persuaded people that they could hear just as well by standing in side streets, of which there is no lack just there. People stood up on tram and bus tops to try to peep into the playground, but it remained utterly dark, the gate was sternly locked, and when the programme came to an end, the singers faded away by a back gate, and went home.

Something of the sort went on for years, and out of it grew an annual concert held in the largest hall obtainable in the neighbourhood, originally intended to give the people a chance of hearing first-rate artistes in splendid music right on their doorsteps, and at a reasonable price. It was common knowledge that these concerts, carried on for years, never had an audience

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of less than a thousand, and the boys' choir of the school figured handsomely in every programme. I once asked the Master how he managed to get such famous singers to take part.

He laughed, then told me that the musician was responsible, but that artistes were not asked to come for nothing, but were offered their fee in the ordinary way. However, he said, they were told what the school was up to with this concert, and, the Master said, he would never forget the kindness of these artistes. Never, he repeated. Often they took an abated fee, and more than one flatly refused to take the fee at all. One great lady went further : she paid a visit to the school, sang to the boys, as they asked her to do so, and then one day presented it with a cup for one of the branches of sport running in the school ! She was one of the refusal folk.

The Master held that one of the most dangerous enemies of clear connected thought was slovenly speech, so when he found among his staff a man with a passion for the theatre, and an uncommon flair for training players and for producing plays, he woke up enthusiasm for playing plays. This cut right at the root of the habit of clipped, lazy speech, and cleaned up mental processes.

Soon it was found that it also taught lads to walk decently, and that had an effect on mental workings . . . so much so, that later on, the Master said, he gave incoming boys lessons in walking, adjuring them to carry their weight from the hips, upward and downward, and not from their shoulders slouching as if they bore all the burdens of the world on their backs.

It may be objected that this is all very well, but what parents want to know is what sort of actual school education was given to the boys in this odd school. Certain may say, as I've heard them do, that even if you turn out film stars as far as their speech and action go, yet, if they can't write a decent hand, spell pretty well, and know what twice two make, they won't stand much chance of earning bread. They may say that even if it is true, as John Galsworthy is credited with asserting, that there are only two classes in this country, namely, one which speaks the King's English and one that does not, and if also it is true that the boys educated at the Master's school belong to the first-named section, yet that is no guarantee that they will earn a livelihood.

It is impossible to contradict such objectors, especially when

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one knows, as I do, more than one case of a boy from some of the greatest of schools failing to earn salt, as Midlanders say. I remember a youth of the public school and university past, who told me a disturbing tale of his own attempts to earn salt . . . and at the time he talked to me he was going from door to door trying to sell silk stockings. He told me he was a "ghastly failure" at that job as he "couldn't sell the darned things for nuts."

I remember a secretarial lady who spoke two foreign languages fluently, wrote clearly and forcibly, but could not add up a single column of figures accurately. Despite a pleasing personality and some willingness, she spent more time moving from job to job than she did in holding down any job of worth to her.

My Master must face these hard facts, and I can assert that I pressed such matters on his attention pretty frequently. Very well, what resulted?

I'll try to tell you, keeping as closely to the words of my friend as I can after this lapse of time. He began by reminding me of the war of 1914-1918. He said that his experience of men during that time, and he declared that he had met thousands, including hundreds of hospital cases, scores of badly wounded men, and many who had been wounded more than once yet had to go back to the line . . .

Now, said he, one thing sticks in my mind more than any other single factor in the immense memory of those men, and it is this: they all, or nearly all, loved to talk of home, of their days in civil life, their pursuits, their pranks, but, most consistently, they talked of schooldays. No matter what school they had attended, they talked of schooldays, so I felt that one of the things a school should do, having this fact in mind, is to give its pupils some fine memories, some capacity for happiness independent of material things, some memory of doings that were not at all concerned with getting anything, but with the delight of understanding, mastering an intellectual problem, of getting to know something for the thrill of knowing it.

I wanted, he said, to give them the power to appreciate the exquisite pleasure inherent in cultivated mental power. I wanted them, that is my pupils, to be able to think out their own problems clearly and connectedly, shaping clearly every word of each thought as thought called it into the mind, and not to muddle or scamp the job of thinking.

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You can easily guess how that exposition appealed to me, and I encouraged my Master to go on. He did. He explained that the lads could not have a mentor at their elbows all their days, therefore, inasmuch as no school could foresee all the catches in every individual life that the boys would lead, and as no school could arm with specific armament against every possible chance of life, it was imperative that the school should induce into the mind the capacity to deal with its own affairs, and should provide each mind with certain rock-bottom knowledge whereby each could and would know how to get the further knowledge it might find itself requiring, and would know where to look for it.

So, he held, it was his job first to warm minds, as he called it, then to stiffen their fibre, and also to infect them with fine desire. He said that any or all the subjects in the usual curriculum could be used to these ends, and that in so using these subjects, the actual abilities required in the hard world of work would be developed. And he gave me examples. He insisted that he never framed a syllabus simply to cover the scope of a particular examination such as the school certificate, but he claimed that if pupils wished to take such a test, the work done as it was done in his school made it possible. Boys would know how to study, they could think, and marshal facts, and all that, so that their chances would be good, and he showed me records of results that proved him to be right, and as successful as the usual run of what he called "swot shops". That is if you are measuring success by the number of certificates taken.

So let us look at some of the things he showed me, and then we can let my Master of the Red Cross train take his rest, or indulge his eccentricities if he desire that rather than rest.

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XVIII

TO SCHOOL, VIA GUNNERY

UPON reflection, the outcome of a walk which itself arose from mental dis-satisfaction with the line one's thought was taking, I come to the conclusion that the best way to illustrate the work of the Master I have mentioned is that of giving a few samples of the work as it went on in his school. Thus I may escape a pitfall. I may avoid showing ignorance of the "art" and "mystery" of teaching to any expert in the craft who may cast an eye on these pages.

A walk is a wonderful thing for clearing away mental fog, and for stripping off pretences. Also, if I may parody a well-known line, "A long tramp is a gladsome thing, God wot" for itself alone. Some have put it higher still. Maeterlinck, for instance . . . What does he say, where he is listing the people who may each

"Va se promener dans la campagne ou contempler le coucher du soleil" ?

Why, that those people in bulk

"apportent une aide anonyme et inconsciente, mais considérable, au triomphe de la grande flamme humaine."

Perhaps, after all, the quotation is somewhat overstrained, and not so apt as I imagined it was going to be when the alluring book, brown and restful in its gilt-lettered back, jumped into my mind when I thought upon my walk. Nevertheless, let it stand . . . for it was a lovely day when I took the walk cited.

Sunshine and high scattered cloud played hide-and-seek with each other in a vast dome of thin blue until an onlooker felt that he saw

". . . the spiritual city and all her spires
And gateways in a glory like one pearl . . . " :

a long lazy ripple lapped the sand at the foot of the cliff, sand that looked so soft that it must be incredible that heavy machines can roll upon it and leave but the merest of traces . . . yet it is a fact that this is the case, for firing practice was going on and some of the half-track vehicles encroached on the sand from time to time as they manœuvred, scarcely disturbing the surface thereof. The rattle of pom-pom guns mingled with the sharp

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crack of Bofors, and once or twice the heavy boom of big stuff came drowsily from a more distant range . . . and the incisive, business-like crack of the nearby guns contrasted oddly with the slow billowing of the smoke which seemed to become infected with the prevailing sleepiness immediately it escaped from the guns.

The sea dimpled in myriad wavelets: the gunners went soberly and purposefully about their work: a thin wire slung from convenient trees or posts connected them with the outer world . . . and somewhere, hidden from them and from us all, a mind was controlling all their activity. What a parable . . . Come, let's get back to my Master.

I was going to try to illustrate how he strove to induce into pupils the power, and then the habit, of clear thinking, by the use of ordinary studies, and even as I came back to the job I happened on this in a short report that caught my eye,

"The classics tend to develop the power to think clearly, to form a sound judgment . . ."

and the writer adds a bit more, to wit,

"and so to realize one's own weakness and humility."

Now, my Master agreed entirely with the first part of this quotation, though, of course he had not seen it when his opinion on the subject was formed, but he did insist that other studies could be so handled as to have the same effect in producing these desirable powers.

Very well . . . so to examples of attempts at such handling. They are all taken from the practice of certain members of his staff, and could be multiplied easily by looking at the work of some others also . . . they could be multiplied indefinitely too.

There was a master who taught Arithmetic, Algebra, Trigonometry, and such-like things that boys love! He demolished the worship of the right answer, for he insisted that every example worked must, when finished read like a paragraph in a book, and that the answer must flow from the preceding work inevitably. So, when finished examples were brought to him they were read through, not merely marked right or wrong, and if the result shown, with all the neat double underlining so beloved of many boys, did not come from the preceding steps, then no credit was given to figures that coincided with the answer given in the answer book.

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This same master once found a glaring example of a correct set of figures standing at the end of work that did not lead to them with the inevitableness he demanded of such work, so he asked the lad how he had reached his result. After the usual schoolboy shuffling he admitted he had cribbed it from another boy whose work he could see. Instead of slanging the lad for cribbing the master asked him if he could now work out such things ; had he mastered the process and made himself able to follow the thoughts required in tracing the problem to its solution. The boy had to admit that he could not. The master pointed out to him that in effect he was saying that he was none the better for the work he had done, and that he was admitting that he was beaten by the job. He also suggested that that was not the attitude for a boy : that it wouldn't do.

The Master to whom I give the capital M every time I have to refer to him in telling of this, remarked that cribbing died away as the boys came to realize that it was of no use, and in addition, a much improved facility in the maths. subjects developed. He also mentioned . . . I believe I have said earlier that he could be a bore on occasions . . . that he hoped I saw how this kind of education did place responsibility on the pupil, and he reiterated his statement made more than once on the Red Cross train that much of the harshness, and the cruelty arising among humans in their dealings with one another arose from a dull feeling of inferiority. He insisted that the habit of realizing responsibility and of accepting it, even in little things; that training and education by and through the holding of responsibility, would eradicate that feeling of inferiority.

Therefore he would say with his deprecatory smile, if ever any of these lads became "bosses" they won't boss in the manner so much resented to-day, and life will move towards more co-operative and less strife-provoking conditions . . .

Mind you, my Master was no quack boosting a nostrum. Very much the contrary. He held that every problem was individual, must be scrutinized closely and with careful thought : that then the steps to be taken in attempting to solve it should be thought out quietly and judicially, tested and tried, as there was no rule of thumb that would do more than give one a hint as to a possible way to go to work.

In fact, though he had not read the book, for it wasn't written

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at that time, he agreed with the truth so strikingly stated by Dr. Peter Drucker in his *End of Economic Man* . . .

> "We search for a formula, a little secret word, a simple mechanism which will suddenly turn chaos into order. This endeavour has produced a faith in purely magical short cuts to Utopia compared with which the gullible and naive credulity in miracles of times past appears discerning and critical reasoning."

I feel sure that if my Master has ever seen that paragraph it has pleased him mightily.

I remember being told that he laid himself out to go round his school every day, more than once if possible, and to be available to members of his staff at any time. Making the round was not a trifling job for, including workshops, there were three buildings, with many storeys, but he loved to do it. I once asked him if he went round with a microscope . . . and he interrupted me quickly to declare that he never went hunting faults . . . never. He averred that he looked for things to commend, though, he admitted, he did examine closely, but that he took the line he mentioned out of regard for the health of his own mind and soul.

I've often thought on that statement, and here I venture to draw the attention of many of our propagandists to it. Due observance of the practice it suggests might brighten the lugubrious faces of some of them and relieve the heavy gloom of their spirits, and so make this world a brighter place for many of us. Perhaps, too, there wouldn't be so much wrong in the world as we are told there is, if commendable acts were brought to our notice with the iteration, or some fraction thereof, given to the publicizing of the other sort of doings.

Reading was taught by example as much as by practice, in the school, and every effort was made to show boys how and where to obtain information on any subject in which they were dabbling. This necessitated reading, and purposeful reading at that, and masters in the school were keen on getting boys to state the content of something read with accuracy and exactitude. Thus they struck at the root of the slovenly habit of skimming and in the same blow demolished plenty of pretence, as boys who really could tell what they had read had no need to pretend they knew somewhat they didn't know; also, they lost the need to shout

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the other fellow down. Noise as a substitute for fact and reasoning loses its value.

When it came to writing anything, be it a set essay on a theme or merely a minute of the debating society, of course my Master was right on his hobby horse. Still, he didn't ride it more purposefully than did his masters. They pressed on the lads that writing was a kind of long range speech, and therefore, as they found it imperative to say what they meant precisely, if they desired it to have any effect, so must they write clearly what they desired to convey by *that* effort. He was fond of telling of a famous critic who rebuked a great writer when the latter complained that his writing on a certain subject had been misunderstood, by telling the scribe that the function of the author was so to express his thought that he made the reader think that thought, and that if the writer were misunderstood then the fault was in the author, not in the reader! A sobering thought that.

So it came about that the lads felt the need of knowing some of the technical tricks of the writing business, that is of Grammar, and I was told that the teaching of grammar in the school was done on that line, much as, in the shops, boys were taught how to use the tools required for a job and were practised therein. If boys were set a task in writing, such as what is called in schools, an essay, the subject on which it was to be written was known well ahead, so that lads could look up data, get their thoughts in order and buttressed with knowledge, and thus come to their task with something to say. The reading of their compositions to classmates was indulged in at times, and I was told that many a sprightly discussion arose from that practice.

That reference to tools used in workshops reminds me of an incident in one of the school shops that I saw myself. The master in the shop was an artist in woodcarving, and the lads loved to see him at work on a piece, as he called his efforts in that direction. He also had a fine appreciation of the beauty of timber so that he never lost a chance of directing his lads' attention to the varying qualities of it in different woods. He showed them pictures of trees, chatted on the life-story of a tree, showed how timber was used in architectural concepts, and so on. Further, he indulged his classes in extensive examinations of architectural styles, practised them in drawing examples illustrating points

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mentioned, and even stirred them into making journeys to buildings that contained samples. He pointed out that architectural specimens illuminated history and told many a tale to him who was apt to read it.

He was a good cricketer, too, and that may have had something to do with his popularity. But let's get to the incident mentioned above.

A boy had completed the building of a small wall-cupboard, and before proceeding to polish and finish off the job, he had to submit it to the master I've been talking about. I stood aside while this went on, and I saw how the boy gradually began to show some apprehension, as the master turned the model over and over in his purposeful hands. Presently he said to the boy, "Well?"

The boy shuffled his feet about but didn't answer. The master tried again.

"This joint here," he said, pointing to one that anchored the structure to the back frame. "Will it do?"

"I . . . I . . . thought it would be safe, sir," ventured the boy.

"Because the others would make up for it, eh?"

Pause.

"Or did you think," went on the craftsman, "that you could putty up the gap where it doesn't fit quite as it ought, and then varnish the model instead of polishing it . . . H'm? The poorish joint wouldn't be seen then, would it?"

The boy smiled . . . "I did think of varnishing the model, sir," he admitted.

"And very nice the job would look," admitted the master. "But should you be really satisfied with it? Would this joint really be what it pretends to be? Is it a good joint?"

"No, sir."

"But the job would be finished and you wouldn't have to spend any more time on it, eh? You could begin to think of something fresh?"

"I'll take it down and make a fresh joint, sir," said the boy, though he couldn't keep the smile from his face.

"Yes," said the master gravely, "I think it would be better to do that."

Now, I put it to you, as counsel sometimes says to a witness, that here was a subtle method of drawing attention to the damage

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impatience may do to one's work: to the value of straight, fearless thinking about anything one is doing: to the fact that the practice of connected thought is here inculcated and stressed: and to the value of sincerity applied to one's daily work.

The boy wouldn't realize then what had been done to him in this little colloquy, very likely, at any rate in its completeness ... but, I venture to assert that in later years he surely would, and would benefit therefrom.

From the day this school was opened, no matter who was head, every day's work began with a short service of a religious character. The boys assembled in their rooms, and later were marched into hall for the service. The head conducted it as a rule, and as he was seen approaching a master blew a whistle to call the lads to attention, and for all the buzz of chatter to cease.

Well, my Master as I persist in calling him, made some detailed alterations in this procedure. Thus: he directed the attention of the boys to the fact that they would not be marched to their places day in day out, as he put it, when they left school. Then why do it here, he asked? So it was arranged that they should be released from their rooms and would just walk into hall as if they were going into any other place of assembly. Then, he told them that the whistle blowing would cease. When they saw a master come to the platform, they were to stop all conversation, take their places for the service, and stand smartly to attention. It was up to them to see that they did what they had come there to do, not for the staff to make them do it, and they should take a pride in doing it well.

An old boy talked to me about this matter and he said they were "rather bucked" at this placing of an onus on them, and he strongly praised the idea, remarking that such procedure became the order for all assembly occasions, but when I spoke of it to the Master, he merely grinned and said he had been giving the lads a chance to do their own job, nothing more.

The more I think on these things, the more I see how the whole work of the school was animated by a singleness of purpose, yet done with a meticulous attention to detail, even the smallest. The Master, on being approached on this point said that education was a matter of detail. He told me roundly that it was not a dreaming of dreams and seeing of visions, but the making of a plan that was so flexible that it could be adapted in

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a moment or two to changing circumstances and then the working out of the consequences of the plan, and the processes of its application, in the most exact detail.

"It's like war," he said reminding me of our experiences elsewhere, "It is no use making swagger plans that look like the work of genius on paper, unless you see to it that every "button on every man's shoes" is good and sound and doing its work: that every circumstance is turned to account in the total you are intending to get . . . and so on." He went on to tell me that he had once seen a driver of a train going carefully over his engine, though it had been handed to him as ready for the road . . . and he said that when twitted with his carefulness the man had said that he took no chances . . .

There was an art room high up in the school where designing, sketching, colour-work, poster-making, and all sorts of things were taught. The Master persuaded the authority to have the walls treated with some hard surfacing so that the lads might paint and draw on them, that things put on them might be washed off again from time to time, and that the boys might try their hands at something big, now and then.

I was asked to go up once to see some of the work. If I hadn't known that the pictures painted on the walls were the unaided work of boys I should never have dreamed it possible. I remember one very well indeed.

It showed a heath or something of that sort, with a track winding from the bottom of the picture to disappear over a slight rise that closed the view. There were trees on the right of the track, and on the left the ground undulated, rising rather sharply from the rutty track, and showing in a dip a little dew pond. The whole composition was sombre, and the sky was heavy over all. The boy who did it was about sixteen, I fancy, and I talked with him about it, standing before it. He said it wasn't right, somehow. It was what he remembered of some place he had seen, but it wasn't right. It was too dark. I remember thinking it would almost do for the celebrated "blasted heath" every schoolboy knows, but I kept that thought to myself.

The boy borrowed a book of reproductions of pictures from the master and pored over them. I left him at it.

Later on I saw that bit of work again . . . it was alive, and vigorous . . . I asked if the boy was available, and he soon came.

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Well, I told him, he had made a tremendous difference in his picture. What had he done? He said he had put in beyond the low ridge that made the background, a light in the sky, and that that had made the picture complete for he had seen a distant light when he saw the place, a sort of sunset fading light . . . and that now he had got it in, he was satisfied with the job.

I told him that a critic once had said that a landscape should always suggest that there was something beyond the view seen in the picture : that there should be a feeling of a far distance beyond the thing portrayed. He said he had been told that after he had put in the improvement. The Art Master had told him, and had said that Ruskin and said it . . . But he had been compelled to think it out himself, I told myself. He had been made to keep his mind on the matter, to compel it to strive to recollect more accurately than it had done.

Here again was the priceless work being done, that of training human beings to direct and handle their own minds, and with them then, to think connectedly, persistently, and without fear or prejudice. And, oddly enough, the specific work in hand that was bent to this purpose, benefitted amazingly therefrom.

The Master's comment when I talked to him about this activity in his school was to the effect that he had been accused of encouraging five hundred boys to chalk on walls and to deface neighbouring property! I wondered if this work did do that, and he said that he had taken some pains to find out, but so far he had not discovered any outbreak of that particular plague. The general mental attitude of the boys was, he thought, against anything of that sort, but he was open to correction.

I haven't heard that he has abandoned his wall painting in school . . . by the hands of boys, I mean, of course.

The Master quizzed me unmercifully on that occasion, I remember, as to the reason for my interest in the scheme of work in his school, and I simply quoted again to him the dictum of Augustine that has been mentioned earlier in these rambling reminiscences. He took it instantly, and laughed at my method of answering him, but he strongly pressed on me that if I intended to write out the points of method wherein his school adventured on the training into the boys the ability so lacking that its lack struck Augustine ages ago and strikes us to-day,

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then I have *some* job, for every man of his staff, and there were some two dozen of them, had developed the idea, and every one of them was keen and inventive therein. He said that I could go on giving examples for a year or two, there were so many available.

Further, he informed me that each man was a specialist in some subject or other, but yet, each made use of the work of the others to strengthen his own effort, and all of them were keen on weaving all the efforts together into one whole pattern of sound effort in real education. To illustrate his point he gave me this :

He went into the machine-shop one day and heard the master, a qualified engineer as well as a schoolmaster, talking to his lads about a drawing they had made and dimensioned ready for working it out on sheet metal. He was commenting on a lapping joint involved in the process and asked the lads how much metal they would have to take from the sheet in order to work the exercise. On the answer being provided, the master remarked that this exercise and the particular calculation just now made gave then an example of the rule they had so often come across in working algebra examples involving the removal of brackets, namely, that you multiply or divide before you add or subtract.

"I heard that as I walked up the shop towards the little drawing office where the lads were collected just then," said he to me, "and though it is a little thing to remember, yet I do remember it because in its little way it shows a big practice that is very valuable in a school, that of close co-operation, and of knowledge in every member of the staff of what other members are doing."

To me, brooding on the unhappy state of this life in its mass, this comment seemed to reach out into profound significance. Suppose we all strove to co-operate, suppose we all tried to get some understanding of what the others are doing, suppose . . .

But I must not let myself be dazzled by the high peaks of possibilities, even if Shelley was so sure that they are there, and that the power to reach them is there also . . . you remember

"Mont Blanc yet gleams on high—the power is there . . ."

And I will not allow myself to be depressed by the other interpretation that may be put on the first limb of the poet's propo-

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sition, that whatever we do, the gleaming height is still remote, still on ahead, and mockingly unattainable, gleaming on high out of reach, like that untravelled world Tennyson said showed through all experience, but whose margin "fades for ever" when we move towards it.

But, out of this comment of the Master sprang later full-grown, like the armed men from the dragon's teeth, a decision to tell him exactly what I had begun to be up to with the things in his practice on which we had talked so often, and to show him some of this compilation . . . and I did it without allowing myself time to have a disturbing thought on the wisdom, or unwisdom, of doing so.

He was interested, but mainly in the theme running through the farrago, though he rubbed his fast greying hair in a somewhat troubled manner, as if he had some qualms about something. Presently he spoke on what was in his mind. He said that he hoped that no one would imagine that the work in his place was all smooth going : that there were no snags : that it might not be possible that it might lead into dangers even more serious than those we habitually face now : or that strong criticism was not forthcoming pretty often, and frequently in a most unexpected manner from unexpected sources, such as parents : and he seemed very much impressed with my quotation from Mr. Winston Churchill, particularly the bit "the atmosphere of the earth seems fatal to the noble aspirations of its peoples", and that other bit that says that the best efforts of men have dismal endings and that there appears no exception to the mournful rule.

I reminded him of Milton's suggestion that all our woes are the result of Adam's readiness to gratify his wife by eating of a certain apple, or fruit of some sort ; you know . . .

"Of man's first disobedience and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world with all our woe . . ."

I quoted from very musty memory and couldn't vouch for textual accuracy, but he said the gist of the quotation was plain enough to be definitely disconcerting to anyone engaged as he was day by day, and then he told me of some of the criticisms he had weathered from time to time.

I give some idea of them, so that it shall not be imagined that

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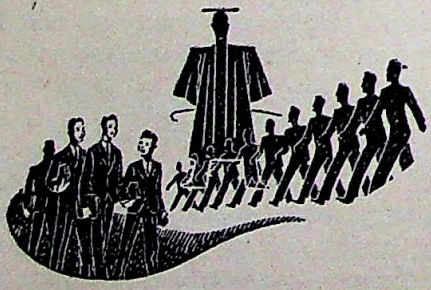
he, or I, think, in spite of Dr. Drucker, (I quoted him a bit back) there is a cure-all, or a magic formula which will clear the world of woe like the blowing away of a mist by a healthy wind, in what he is doing; but I, at least, am sure the thing he is doing is worth trying.

No . . . I go further. I assert that the thing must be done if civilization is to persist and if any fuller realization of the glorious possibilities before the race is to be achieved: and I feel that the education on which we spend so freely must do it if it, the education I mean here, is to be worth a fraction of the expenditure.



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XIX

"UNSULLIED" FACTS

I WONDER if you've read that delicious book *Trader Horn*. If you have you may remember how he used to mix up in his reminiscences comments on the art and practice of writing books, for example, his advice, culled from George Bussey so he said, that selection is the great thing . . . but that facts without the brain, by which I take the liberty to suggest he meant the imagination and thus to excuse any embroidering of facts of which he may have been guilty, are "*stultus*". You may also recall that he remarked that it was good to introduce "antics" to provide a little relief, though he assured Mrs. Lewis that the public likes to read about facts that "have lain undisturbed by the pen of man. Unsullied . . ."

He seemed to be proud of his word "unsullied" for he repeated it to make sure that Mrs. Lewis had got it right, and it certainly appeals to me. To describe unreported facts as facts unsullied by the pen of man is charming to the pedestrian user of words, something akin to the odd thrill one felt on being told by another writer of the delight of being in a place where the air and the earth hadn't been contaminated by the presence of humanity. Contaminated! It's not my word, but it does give one a sudden sensation of clean purity that would purge the soul.

However, I didn't drag in *Trader Horn* to find an excuse to ramble at large in the fields of literary criticism, but really to allow me to suggest that perhaps I may ramble a little off the main road as I tell one or two criticisms made to my Master regarding his work, or his way of doing it, as there may be some odd delight for some reader in the same one of these days; and that the divagations I perpetrate may be regarded as "antics", permissible or even desirable in a work, as we are assured by so respectable an authority as George Bussey via such an impeccable reporter as Trader Horn. Here's an example of a sudden widening of a mental horizon arising from one of the rambles of Trader Horn, just to illustrate what I mean.

From my childhood, even from the days of sitting in that stack-yard in the sun conning a book, I had used the phrase, "donkey's years" to indicate a sort of never, never; or perhaps

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a very long time signified by the erudite by the word "æons", even as the never, never, is indicated by these same scholars by the words "*Greek kalends*". Well, Trader Horn used the phrase thus, "In a donkey's years" and the insertion of that little article "a" opened away huge curtains obscuring vast mental spaces, and hiding old memories.

It linked the phrase with the superstition that donkeys never die, and from being a mere slovenly phrase for idle minds to use to save further thought, the saying started into life . . . and a sudden picture from the long gone came up again after being completely forgotten for half a century : a weather-beaten old labourer rubbing his unshaven chin and looking down on me, a bit of a lad, and asking me if I'd ever seen a dead donkey. My answer had to be "No", and he grimly retorted with slow, heavy emphasis, "No, nur never wunt, neether," and nodded with such finality that I believe I took his word as gospel truth.

Well, here's hoping, as I've heard soldiers say in this latest war, and let's get to the "antics".

One of the criticisms levelled against the Master's efforts was no new thing, inasmuch as it paraphrased the old one which said that if you made very good writers, that is pupils skilful in hand-writing, you furnished these particular pupils with the means to become expert forgers. In various shapes this was urged against my Master and was warningly pressed by many of the critics, especially by one old acquaintance of his, a parson. However, he tried not to be unduly perturbed thereat, but he did insist strongly throughout his work on the absolute necessity for the balancing of the training in mental ability with great care in training character.

It was pressed upon him that the advance in education thus far achieved had produced a race able to argue that black is white when it suited any particular section to desire this achievement : and as an example thereof, it was cited that the whole nation had agreed that there may be a case at times when the eighth commandment shall be expunged from our decalogue, and anyone's property taken from the owner whether he will or no if a majority in Parliament should so decree. It was pointed out to the Master that the more you improve the concentrative power of the mass of minds the more risk you run that the said mass may apply its power to efforts plainly wicked, that even a whole nation may

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drive hard into coarse iniquity, and Germany was offered as an example.

The rise to power of Hitler was mentioned as illustrating the threat inherent in mass mind trained ability if it should be misled, and the fact that the leaders of Germany could indulge in stark murder of colleagues whom they chose to dislike without protest by the nation at large, was quoted as showing that national mind might easily become evil mind if strongly moved and strongly capable.

The Master countered by urging that there was the opposite possibility also, namely, that the national mind might also soar to heights of righteousness hitherto undreamed of, if strongly moved thereto and strongly capable. To that I felt compelled to reply by mentioning that in our own country we had felt doubts as to the righteousness of the national will as expressed by the majority that chanced to rule in Parliament, inasmuch as a writer on Constitutional Law had stated that the opinion that Parliament cannot legislate against morality was manifestly wrong for many people hold that the Divorce Laws contravene both Divine and moral law, but the Courts must give effect to those Laws nevertheless . . . and he goes on to say that where there are no fundamental laws (perhaps such as the decalogue for example) there is no authority that can declare the expression of a phase of national will in a statute invalid or wrong.

However the Master might delude himself, I suggested, there is the danger.

I got voluminous arguments in reply, but what they finally boiled down to was this : That the training in shouldering responsibility in a small integrated society such as his school would so temper the lads' minds that they were not likely to misuse their acquired mental ability : that most of the wickedness and the mistaken ideas as to what is right or wrong arise from impatience, and from muddle-mindedness that is everlastingly in a mess and so is unhappy : and that the impatience arises from the muddle-mindedness and the messy thinking arising therefrom, as does most of the unhappiness, so that if minds are trained to think fearlessly, objectively, impersonally, the possibility of messy thinking will fade away, and with it the most part of the evil-doing in the world will fade away too . . . for if the messy thinking goes then the impatience goes and hence,

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so does the muddling unhappiness that afflicts so many people.

As I said once before, Here's hoping . . . but the Master has faith.

Arising out of this discussion, which cropped up over a period of many years again and again, and some of it even during the time of this last war, came one or two reminiscences from the Master that he used for his purpose but that I put in almost as what Trader Horn called antics . . . anyway, one of them at least was not "unsullied" by the mouth of man, or his pen for that matter as my Master took down what was said verbatim, and read it to me after many years.

By the way, this habit, for habit it became with him, of writing down what was said at interviews was started in the Master by the incident I have already mentioned in telling of his difference of opinion with an inspector. He was so deeply miserable after he got home that wretched day, that he reduced to writing the whole interview as well as his scheme of work and his reasons for the shape it took, ready to defend himself if he was called up by the authority with a view to its dismissing him.

He also revived a schoolboy habit of writing shorthand. Further, he told me that an affair with a parent at the school had a strong effect in hardening the shape of his thought on matters educational, so that this particular school had much to do with his development . . . and his success, I add, even if it were not an example of educational efficiency of the highest class.

The incident was trifling and it concerned another master, not himself, who had a complaint from a parent delivered in person. The master concerned was from Yorkshire, was a big athletic person, young, fearless, a heavy-weight boxer of standing in his own county, a horseman, a player of Rugby football, and addicted to the blunt expression of his opinions. My Master said he didn't know what had brought such a man into teaching, but I believe he didn't stay in it long. The war of 1914 took him into the army, and I think teaching saw him no more.

However, he evidently had some gleams of the truth my Master spent his time in expressing, for he taught Arithmetic *via* Algebra, my Master said, as particular applications of general truth, thus practising his boys in directed thinking. A parent objected, and came to the school to state his objection, and moreover, to issue his orders to the teacher who, to quote his words, was paid his "sellery" by the parents.

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The bit my Master remembered vividly was this . . .

The parent : I do' want any of this 'ere Elgebbera taught to my lad. I wance 'im taught somethin' that'll be useful to 'im when he goes to work. See ?

The teacher : Oh, yes. But that is exactly what I am teaching him. This work will teach him to reckon accurately, and to think.

The parent : Think be blowed. I'm goin' to make 'im a booking clurk. You teach 'im to tot up, and not to mess up 'is change.

The teacher : (trying to be sarcastic) Would you like me to set up a machine like those in the booking offices and practise the lad in handing out tickets ?

It was at this point, I am informed, that the reference to the so-called "sellery" and the payers thereof came into the discussion, and that rubbed the teacher the wrong way so he said,

Look here. If you are going to cut meat do you sharpen the knife by cutting meat ? Tell me that.

The parent : Course not . . .

then seeing that he was giving his case away he tried the hectoring trick again, even threatening the teacher with what he'd do if his orders were not obeyed, and at that the teacher terminated the interview by opening the door and inviting the parent to come outside and talk sense.

I asked what happened then, and my Master said, Nothing. The father went away declaring that he would write in about it, but nothing more was heard on the matter, so apparently that was an empty threat. I said that I should be interested to know if the boy really did become a booking clerk, but I supposed the school didn't know. "Oh, yes, we did," the Master said. "He left as soon as he was fourteen and became a van-boy ; you know, one of those imps that swing dangerously on the tailboard of a delivery van, clinging to a rope. But I don't know what became of him after that ! "

* * * *

In my Master's school there were the usual games sides ; cricket, football, and even tennis : there were swimming, running, boxing, gymnastics, and there was badminton. There was a debating society, and an excellent dramatic society with its own stage that had been designed, built and fitted, even to its lighting

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scheme, on the premises, and there was a small printing-room with machines and type and all that, so that a school magazine could be produced on the spot, as could programmes, though the school magazine soon outgrew the possibilities of the printing-room.

And there was for quite a time a master on the staff who amused himself in part of his holidays and many of his evenings by running and organizing travel tours . . . To Switzerland, Paris, Germany, the Tyrol, Palestine, Algiers, and even to Biskra where the high spot was to see the real desert, and to walk in the street of the *Ouled Nails*. It's obvious what this man's sideline would suggest to the Master, and so there was a travel club started in the school.

It began quietly, visiting such places as St. Albans, York, Bournville, The Temple, Westminster, Barnet Field, and so on, but soon parties were exploring Paris, the Channel Islands, Germany, and more than once they joined in a trip organized by many schools to the Norwegian Fjords. The boys paid in the money for these trips week by week throughout the year, and sometimes over a longer period, and it was out of this practice that what I call "antic two" gets in here. I got it because the Master once, when clearing out old papers, read his note of it to me, and offered the comment that much of the harshness in integrated life arises from impatience . . . riding his hobby horse, you see.

Further, the parent concerned was well-known to me at one time, as I had listened to him orating at a street corner many a time. I believe he had considerable local influence, and he certainly possessed ready volubility. He was a grim fault-finder, I remember, and I recall that somehow I thought of him as always walking around with a watchmaker's glass in one eye so that no fault should escape him.

He called at the school, but the Master was engaged at the moment so he had to wait a little while before he was shown into the sanctum. Immediately he entered he roundly asserted that his time was valuable and that he would be obliged if the head would give attention to the matter he had come about. The Master replied that he had asked his visitor in that he might attend to him, and that he was pleased his time was valuable because his own was also. The caller truculently retorted that

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no doubt the Master thought that, but what he had meant was that he himself had to work for a living, not like some folks.

The Master said he quite understood that, though, of course, he was lucky enough to be looked after so well that he merely sat there waiting for his nurse to come and feed him and then take him to bed and tuck him in. He said to me when he was reading the note that he had thought the man would laugh at that and treat it as a jest so that the atmosphere would become a little less strenuous, but the visitor curtly remarked that he didn't want any funny stuff, so the Master took up the gauntlet.

"Neither do I," he said. "Please be good enough to get to business. What do you want?"

"I want to know, and I mean to know, how much you make out of this 'ere business of taking the lads on trips to foreign parts. You must collect a nice bit of money year after year, and I don't see what right you have to make profit out of the bits of savings of these lads."

"You are quite satisfied that I do make a profit?"

"Of course. Nobody's mug enough to do that sort of thing for nothin' ".

"Then what is it exactly you want to know?"

"How much you take in the year, and how much you make out of it."

"The total?"

"Yes. You must make quite a good thing out of it."

"No doubt . . . Plenty of odd jobs for one or another of the staff for which no one gets any overtime pay."

"I've figured it out. You must have collected pretty nigh a hundred and fifty quid this year already, and I want to know what you do with it all through the year. My lad's been paying in for ten munce and I ain't going to see him exploited for nobody. There must be a nice bit of interest drawed on all this cash. Where's it go? What's my lad's share of it?"

"The money is banked, that's quite right, as every boy in the school knows."

"Then I want to know, I demand to know, how much you've collected this year, how much interest you've got on it, and what my lad's share in this interest is."

"Will you tell me if the other parents who have paid in money have authorized you to make inquiries about their payments?

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You say you want to know how much we've collected this year, and that concerns the other parents, doesn't it?"

"What the . . . What's that got to do with it? And what are you putting down on that paper?"

"Only this conversation. I'll read it to you afterwards if you like. But, I don't think I can give any chance caller information on the affairs of parents of children in this school. I'm sure you will understand that."

"Look 'ere, mister. You may be mighty smart, but you ain't dealin' with kids now. I want to know, and I'm going to know, all about this money . . . and where the interest on a hundred or two that ain't yours, mind that, ain't yours, goes to. See?"

"You may ask what you've paid in, and that I'll tell you. You have no right to ask anything further. I'll send for the figures of your payments and give them to you in a minute or two if you will wait outside."

"I don't want my figures. I know 'em. I've told you what I want and I mean to have it."

"Very well. Now look here . . . There's no point in this talk going on any longer. I refuse to answer your questions, put very rudely, I suggest. So you will have to make any further inquiries elsewhere. We, that is the men employed here, are public servants, and you must make any further inquiries of the employing authority now I refuse to answer. Shall I give you the address? I'll give you a stamped addressed envelope if you like. And as to interest on the money in the travel fund, well, you must ask the bank for that information. Call there, the bank on the next corner after this school . . . you know it? . . . good . . . Call there and say I have told you to do so and that I agree to your asking the question you will be there to ask. Good day."

"I don't want any of your cleverness, nor none of your stamped envelopes neether. I know the council offices all right, and where to go when I get there. And you can bet I'm going and all. And I'll show you what's what. Call at the bank, do I? I will too, and I'll find out about that interest you've been getting all these years, and I'll demand to know what's gone with it. See? I'll make it hot for you, see if I don't."

"Thank you. Perhaps you will be so kind as to do me another small favour. When you've found out about the interest on this money, please let me know all about it, will you? I should very

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much like to know where it is or who gets it, and the rate per cent. Do let me know."

I asked the Master if he heard anything further about the matter, and he laughed, tearing up the papers whereon his note had been made. "Not likely," he said. "The man ran true to type. He didn't go to the office. I asked about that, to be sure. And, of course, everybody knows that banks don't pay any interest on little in and out accounts like our travel account. They are far more likely to charge for the service they say they do us in taking the money in and keeping the account."

That's antic two, though my Master doesn't agree with me about so labelling it. He says it is an example of the truth he expounds, viz., that the man came to him as a result of muddled thinking which bred hot impatience in him. He asserted that if the man had been able to make his mind think the matter out calmly and without prejudice, he wouldn't have come along with his request, or at any rate, he wouldn't have been so threatening and rude. He said the incident showed the need for power to think coolly, without animus or anger, and steadily, and that then the mind would not blind itself with sudden anger and so lead its owner to do silly things, or perhaps, even violent things.

So, he ended, the story his old note had brought to light again was evidence in favour of his belief that well-trained minds, balanced minds as he called them, will not run amuck doing evil at every end and turn, or anywhere else, as he quaintly added.

Whether it is such evidence or not, I leave to the learned to say, but I hope the tale will serve the purpose I mentioned when I quoted Trader Horn. And, in case there be any of those inquiring minds that require to know the end of a thing, minds mainly feminine I refer to here, I will add that I asked if the son of the truculent caller went on the trip for which he was paying in his money, and was told that he did.

Antic three is brief, though, to me, pungent. At an early stage of the Master's life in the school I've been talking about, there was considerable anxiety about shortage of male teachers, and my Master, among others, was asked to speak to his senior boys on the prospects in teaching as a profession, and to try to move some of them to offer themselves as candidates for training. He wrote to the parents of all his sixteen-year-olds and put the matter to them, and he did talk to the boys about it. Eight

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parents each offered a son as a candidate, and the Master interviewed the boys concerned. They all accepted their fate, and forms for them to fill in were applied for.

Some days later one of the boys brought back his form not completed, and asked leave to withdraw. Soon another of the chosen did likewise, and by the end of the week when the rot began, all but one had withdrawn. This last one came to the Master late in the day to ask to be allowed to withdraw verbally, promising to bring in the unused form on the Monday.

" 'H'm" said the Master. Then he added the request that this boy should collect the other seven and go to the gymnasium, not in use at the moment, as he, the Master, would like to have a word with them together.

When he met them in the gym., he said he was a bit surprised that all of them should withdraw, and that he would very much like to know, quite frankly, why they did.

No answer. He waited. Some shuffling and apparent uneasiness, but still no answer.

"Shall I ask you individually?" he inquired, and then the last one to withdraw came a step forward and spoke.

"Sorry, sir," he said, "but we all think we should like to do something more manly than teaching in school." ! ! !

* * * *

I suppose I may as well answer that query so natural on such an occasion . . . Did they? Do something more manly, I mean. Did they? I'm sorry I can't answer for all of them, but the lad who made the avowal I knew well, and, happily, still know. He certainly did, according to his lights, for he tried to break the record for a non-stop flight from Cape Town to England with one companion, after volubly arguing with certain commercial big-wigs in trying to show them how valuable commercially quick transit between the Cape and England would become. He got some backing and tried to blaze the way, and to set up a non-stop record to prove that machines and men could be found to carry on such flights.

He crashed in a jungle, and, though injured, after a bit made his way on foot to some sort of village where he got a certain amount of food and other assistance. He tore up his shirt to patch the plane, and got it into the air again, but was not able to finish the flight. After a period in hospital, he made his way home

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by more unromantic means. This may seem small stuff in these days of half-day hops to America by air, but when this young man tried it the job was mighty different.

And, by the way, I've had a letter from the very fellow while I've been making a fair copy of all this. Typed on excellent paper, with his name and address printed atop in first-class American style, it comes from Jackson Heights, New York. In it he says that here he is again, turning up in the oddest places. He says he wrote to the head, of the school that is, for my address, and that thus he got it. He says that the head sent him a school tie as well as the address, so, says he, "you can guess I am very proud when I walk down Fifth Avenue these days." He says he left England in '38 and after two years in Portugal he went to U.S. and he goes on, "I often think of the grand times we had as kids at . . . school and still think it was the finest school in England, and after the education system over here I will enlarge and make it in the world."

Well, well . . . I think I'll leave it there, though I may perhaps add that this old boy, quite characteristically, sent his letter to me by air mail.

My mind was troubled after writing, "I think I'll leave it there," and I was bothered when I tried to discover whence the trouble. Leave what, and where, I asked myself, and soon came to the conclusion that the doubt that had set itself going in my soul about the wisdom of perfecting the machinery of the mind and making it more and more powerful in every human being lest thus we should but make selfishness more and more dangerous and criminality more and more skilful, was at the base of the trouble stirring.

I decided, as usual, to walk, and soon I was down beside the sea, where great gales had driven masses of seaweed ashore, had thrown lumps of timber athwart the sand that had been so smooth, and where the sea itself seemed as troubled by the after-effect of the storm as my mind was by the after-doubts raised by these old memories. A sharp memory came to me . . . one reminding me of another case where oppressive doubts came after a period of something bordering on exaltation . . . when I had as the colonel padre told me, to my surprise, preached a sermon, having had no intention of doing any such thing.

A dim, misty night in the depth of winter, a lonely farmhouse

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near the borders of Germany, midnight . . . that's the setting of the memory. The time was late 1918, the British Army was moving into, or towards Germany, as a result of an Armistice that had been signed binding belligerents to some sort of a peace for a time. I was moving up with someone of the Intelligence, and on that wet, misty night, drab almost to threatening, we reached a point near the border.

Can you imagine the peculiar feelings that swept over one at such a juncture? There, but a few miles further on was the country about which we had heard such fearsome things during the years of war, the country that had escaped the actual scorch of war, but had seared others with the red-hot flame until they were scarred with damage and littered with dead. Our armies were advancing into it, soon . . .

I was billeted in a lonely farmhouse. There wasn't a village in sight when we halted and I was sent to the billet. We had come across the Somme area, we had been in Ypres. The deadness of those places clung about one, and one remembered a village by the Meuse where the people had strung up, right athwart the main street, a huge effigy of a German soldier hanging by the neck from a line high above the traffic . . . They jeered at it in bitter hate . . .

Sermon? Had it been a sermon worth while? This influencing of the minds of others is surely a most dangerous game: had I set running thoughts that would have been better left unmoved?

I was the only one in this particular billet. I can't remember anything about the people who took me in, nor about the interior of the house where I slept that night. Slept? Not for some time. I can recollect that the place was undamaged, and that a huge barn near the house seemed to me to be as big as many a church in many an English village. I remember that barn very well: I skulked round it later that night . . . Moreover, I can remember going out of my way on reaching Hitchin when on the road years after, more than once, just to run along the road to Luton, because on that road was a barn that reminded me of this one and of the odd feelings of that wet night.

Germany was just about five miles ahead, there were hills; I couldn't sleep. I let myself out of the billet later that night, after midnight, moved unobtrusively round the flanks of the huge barn, and set out across the country, in darkness and the drizzle,

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to have a look at Germany. In that darkness ! ! Crazy, wasn't it? Yet I felt I must go, though I knew I could see nothing of detail, only into the darkness over enemy land. I had practically memorized a bit of my ordnance map, and pushed on. After a long and slow tussle with unknown terrain of mud and soft going, patches of scrub and woodland, I got to the little eminence I had been seeking. At anyrate I satisfied myself that I had so done, and clambering to the summit, I looked east.

There was not a sign of life in the whole prospect; the wet dark clung round me like the cloak round the invisible man. There wasn't a single blink of light anywhere, there wasn't a sound, listen acutely as I might. But I was looking out over Germany, the country we had fought for four years.

Presently I turned for the billet. I experienced considerable difficulty in finding it and I can now feel again the nibbling little apprehension that began to trouble me when I realized that I might be lost, as children say. I began to wonder what Army discipline would say to me if I got mislaid. However, after what seemed hours of weary and slow slogging I struck a road I had noted, checked my bearings as well as I might, and went ahead with more confidence. Soon I was beside the barn, slipping along the line of its comforting walls . . . and in a few moments more I let myself into the farmhouse. I crept to bed, and slept in great style.

All this came back to me when I walked beside the troubled sea after a gale had blown itself out, and pressed itself upon me as an example of the tremendous power of the mind over the whole complex that is an individual human being. Whether we will or no, it seems that the mind is supreme. Very well then, if we train ourselves to direct control and handle this amazing power just as we will, are we doing a wise thing, or are we doing a dangerous thing? And if we are doing a dangerous thing . . . Are not many things dangerous, well worth the doing? Fortunately for us, we are bound to admit now, there are many who answer this last query with a decided affirmative.

I remember a pilot, as an instance. He had fought in the Battle of Britain, one of the few to whom so many owe so much, as Mr. Churchill said after the battle: then he qualified for night-bombing and spent a long time in that work: and when next I heard of him, he was sitting on a settee beside my desk

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talking to me. He had just dropped in, literally, for he had flown a machine to a near-by aerodrome on a test flight. I noticed on his tunic the ribbon of the D.F.C., and "a mention".

Presently I asked him what he was doing just then. He said he was instructing at a station in the Midlands, and on further questioning, told me he was training pilots in power diving, among other points of flying technique. Later that evening I asked him if he was going to stay in the Air Force, and he said he would not stay, though he had been invited to do so, and his reason was that he wanted to get some sort of job where he could use his ingenuity, develop initiative, and . . . here he laughed almost as if he had something to apologize for . . . he wanted to get into a position where he could take a risk or two and make something out of it.

He wanted to make a position and to make money so that he would be independent, but by his own skill and courage. He didn't want to have to refer his ideas to one above him, who would in his turn consult another still further up, whence the idea would go yet higher, and so on, until one had almost forgotten what one's idea was. He wanted to be in a position to try out his notions and take the risk thereof.

As I think of him now I reflect how odd it is that when a young man of British race admits that he desires to make money, and a success of his own life by his own efforts, he shows a sort of shamefacedness, as if he were pleading guilty to some crime or fault. I suppose we have had the poison of anti-profit so sedulously dropped into us by the propagandists of certain ideas that it has really got into the very texture of our thought . . . yet, it is difficult to see where anything other than mere animal subsistence can come from if there is no profit-making.

But we are straying from our question, which is, Are we running into grave danger if we train a whole race into the skill and the habit of controlling strongly in each individual by that individual the mental processes, the thinking powers . . . the most potent thing, the mind, even as we train to control the movements of the body?

The Master I have shadowed out here was, despite qualms that rose in him occasionally, convinced that we are not, though he took immense care to try to sow in his boys a real religious spirit, and agreed that mere material bases for action were

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insufficient if there is to be any real humanity in the world, and he did lay it down that a balanced training must be obtained, not a one-sided one or a purely specialized one, as a foundation on which later development is to stand.

Then, while I mused on these things, I came across a pronouncement of a clergyman, a clergyman well-known by his addresses, many of them broadcast addresses, the Rev. W. H. Elliott. Here it is :

> "We exercise the will in various ways, but there is no way more decisive than when we attempt to control our thinking. I admit it is difficult. *If you and I were really masters of our thinking we should not have to bother much about our doing.*"

I have italicized that last pungent sentence because of the strong support it gives to my own conviction. And because it is so comforting to a serious seeker.

We have been told that Hegel laid it down that

> "By well-educated men we undertsand in the first instance, those who can do everything that others do"

and I have heard that a Head of Bradfield told his senior pupils that the school section of education was a manuring of the ground, the preparation of the mind for its uses, and that this section of education failed if the educated man could not do better than the un-educated man the things the un-educated man did . . . even sweeping a street.

Well . . . well . . .

My Master always had a grave talk with the boys whose time to leave his school had come. He spoke to them in a group first, and then later he saw each one individually. I have been able to collect from one or another a few of the things he said to groups, and perhaps it will not be impertinent if I quote them here, though my Master was but the head of a Council School, and no philosopher. Then we will take leave of him even as his boys did after they had stomached the same sort of dose. Here they are,

> "A famous physician used to say to his students ; Remember, Nature never forgets, Nature never forgives.
>
> Your body is the most wonderful machine that has ever been made. Don't spoil it by mis-use, either in indulgence such

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as over-eating, by drink, smoking too much, lascivious indulgence, or any other slackness.

If you abuse or mis-use your body or mind, Nature will have it out of you for that same, some time or other, sooner or later.

Laziness is one of the most terrible of mis-uses of body and mind.

If you buy a motor car you take care to use the right oil, petrol, grease, and all that, and to use these things in the right quantities. You take care to keep the engine unfouled. You avoid all excess with its workings. Take the same care with your body.

Don't trouble to be sorry for yourself.

Play when you play, and work when you work. Do it thoroughly.

Remember what the labourer said when asked how he accounted for his vigorous longevity, "I never crosses a bridge till I comes to 'un."

When you read, read, never skim.

Every day see to it that you practise thinking connectedly, on a line, and completely, shaping every thought into clear wording in your mind.

Every day say the Lord's Prayer in your mind not letting any thought intrude on the mental saying. If a thought will break in, try again, and keep on doing so until you achieve an uninterrupted recitation of it, the mind never leaving the Prayer during the exercise. And mean every word you say in your mind at this time, striving to be aware of the full implications of all the words."

So, if my Master did play about with the most dangerous explosive in the world, human personality endowed with mind, and if he did so train it as to make it more dangerous potentially, though I say he did not do that, then, anyway, he did arm it with the utmost safeguards or sanitations for all that powerful mind that works it. And he most assuredly agreed with the character in *Framley Parsonage* who felt that a "bright face, a true trusting heart, a strong arm, and an humble mind, might do much in teaching those around him."

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XX

THINK IT OVER

THIS rambling, inconsequent collection of reminiscences stippled with words of others, appears, despite the adjectives I have at this moment applied to it, to achieve an odd coherence despite apparent vagaries, even as the extracts housed in my notebook seem to link together by reason of a subconscious urge perhaps dimly appreciated even if not recognized as the motive force, planted in my mind by events.

It suggests, I submit, that we should be wise to look into the harvested wisdom and collected thoughts of the thousands of years that have passed since humanity began to be conscious that it possessed mental powers, and that we should find there considerable aid to the living of our own lives of to-day. I suggest that, through the evidence adduced in support of that idea, these reflections show that our greatest weakness in the handling of affairs is that of substituting emotional urges for thought, directed careful thought, in cases where reason is required, and that thence flows the deplorable impalpability that seems, as Mr. Churchill said, to poison the atmosphere of the earth so that it becomes fatal to the noble aspirations of its peoples.

The evidence offered shows that all down the ages we have been warned of the danger of our foolish conduct in neglecting to secure facility in the control and direction of our minds though we readily exert enormous effort in securing such power over our hands and other limbs : that this dis-ease or lack of skill has been pointed out to the race by certain among us from the times of the early Chinese thinkers, through ages to the time of Augustine of Hippo, and down to our own day : but that we do nothing real about it.

It is obvious that artists—painters, poets, novelists, architects, designers, musicians, and the like—have shown us again and again how near we are to the splendour of life, and yet we allow this curious mist to intervene and "fog" us off the road ; and from the achievement. It is high time to break out into the sunshine.

And it is contended here that the way thereto is to cure the dis-ease. How ? It seems fundamental that education must do

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the job, but we may be told that we have had popular education for centuries, of one sort or another, and that it has failed. I submit that those who have eyes to see will find herein a suggestion of a reason for the failure in so wide a part of the effort, namely a misapprehension of the function of education. It is suggested here that the educator must realize that his or her task is one of immense detail, of careful individual diagnosis before treatment, and that that part of the work must be done with skill and unself-seeking throughout all the education attempted after mere rudiments of the means of communicating mind with mind have been taught.

It is suggested also that there is no need to wait for fine buildings and swagger equipment before getting on the job: suggested herein by example cited: though those things are certainly extremely valuable ingredients in the medicine prescribed. I remember hearing a member of the Education Committee of London declare in public that some of the best real education he had ever come across was to be found in some of the worst buildings used as schools in London. He was not defending bad buildings; not at all; but he had been stung into showing that human beings could and did rise superior to them.

Nor is it necessary to wait until genetics have given us a better race to work upon, one where the heredity and the heritable qualities shall be of finer stamp and minus those weaknesses so often scolded, for I can testify of my own knowledge to fine chunks of real education being achieved in the schools of the Foundling Hospital, where, if anywhere, the clientèle is varied enough to afford the most convinced determinist excellent material for his study.

Mr. Claude Mullins in his book *Crime and Psychology* also finds himself unable to accept the doctrine of the determinists who hold that all our possibilities are settled for us by heredity and environment. I seem to remember that in that stimulating and valuable book he mentions that Freud and Adler disagree on that issue. And as to his own contentions, surely Mr. Mullins has had unusual opportunities to study the matter, for, after practice at the Bar, he became, and is, a Stipendiary Magistrate in London . . . and I can assure you that practice at the Bar gives one singular and illuminating insights into character and mentality, and when that experience is topped up by that gained in

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sitting as a judge of one's fellows, the acquisition is enriched indeed.

We are opening up vast opportunities in education . . . What a chance! Are we going to use it, mis-use it, or merely partly use it?

Certain flashes from actual school practice that does attempt to do the work that is so urgent are included here to avoid the gibe that it is easy to talk, a gibe I keep before me in words that have, again, come down the ages bringing a picture made on me in schooldays, of the Greek ships drawn up, the heroes seated in a mighty arc, and Ajax fulminating his scornful estimate of wordy warfare as a substitute for action . . .

> "*Tutius est igitur fictis contendere verbis*
> *Quam pugnare manu*" . . .

So, Ovid, nearly two thousand years ago, wrote, and I am inclined to widen the scope of the sneer when I am dabbling in words, and to omit "*fictis*" for not only is it easier to fight with false words than with deeds, but it is so with any words if they are to take the place of acts. So I have put in samples of deeds showing how the vital thing in education has been done, can be done, and is being done, by and through the ordinary subjects of an ordinary school.

The urgent need of power to direct and control thought is more urgent to-day than ever, unless mankind is to perish utterly by the works of his own power. We have been told, in reference to two of the most abominable wars ever to disfigure the face of History, that they were fought to ensure that a form of government called "Democracy" shall not perish from the earth, and we have been reminded again and again of the definition of democracy that has been set up as a sort of authoritative standard since Gettysburg, and yet such a monstrosity as the Germany we have fought can grow up to a frightening maturity under our very eyes in a few years.

Until we can distinguish emotional urges from mental ordering arising out of cool reasoning, such things are possible, even for us. Shelley, in note 3 on *canto vii* of *Queen Mab*, wrote

> "But it is ever a proof that the falsehood of a proposition is felt by those who use coercion, not reasoning, to procure its admission."

I've made use of the argument herein, I'm afraid, and suggested

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that the uneasy doubt mentioned by the poet gives rise to impatience and that the lust for coercion derives from this impatience. Hence the more need for sober thinking, for the evaluating arguments and fiery rhetoric by cold reasoning, which can't obtain if we have not the power to do it.

That we are in very present danger, and very pressing need of the power and of its widespread use, there is evidence day by day. It has been possible to read in the public press just recently : that an editor was told by his political bosses that it is no part of a popular newspaper's job to convince by reasoned argument, but rather to decoy its readers to its point of view : that an educational pamphlet, educational mind you, issued for political purposes actually falsified the order of happening of historic events. Why ?

Shade of Goebbels ! Did that malignant man die in Berlin only to rise again multitudinously, like the armed men from the teeth of the dead dragon of legend, here in our land ? Are we, the commonalty, accurately described as "propaganda fodder" ? So a writer dubbed us recently.

We stand in need of the power and the use of "linked" cool thought to-day as never before. We can produce it in ourselves if we will, and the desire to use it objectively. We must, or democracy becomes a cruel deception as it works in our land. We have been told that Parliament is there to put through a programme of legislation decided on elsewhere, and we are shown that the programme will be forced through even if debate and deliberation are to be stifled or ruled out. Surely a moment's thought, clear thought free of prejudice, will show even the most impatient reformer the danger of such courses, for it is apparent that thus any clamorous section of the nation can seize upon a moment and rush the nation from one recklessness to another, and that a change of the colour of the House will mean contrary legislation and further use of the same methods to achieve opposing results.

Can any great nation tolerate that sort of thing ? Are we content to have Parliament cease to be a deliberative assembly, or a mere shadow deliberative assembly, deprived of time to discuss and consider great issues ? Is it to become the implementing instrument for projects of any voluble outside caucus ? And, when any item in a programme so thrust on Parliament is passed by it,

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does this really constitute an Act . . . Act, I repeat the word . . . of Parliament, with all that this name implies with respect to its effect on us? Are we willing for our paid servants, for that's what Members of Parliament are, to treat us so cavalierly?

We shall find ourselves compelled to face these problems, or some of them ere long, and they will demand cold clear thinking, freed of prejudice and passion. So we'd better get into the habit of using such thought unless we are to run the risk of becoming really merely propaganda fodder, as we have been already so politely named; of being led by statements, whether correct or incorrect, noisily made or trumpeted with sufficient persistence to delude or decoy, (to adopt the word of the propagandists quoted earlier,) and so to find ourselves in time shepherded into the Gadarene slope down which we have seen, in our day, great nations rush to a horrid collapse.

There is great hope in my mind. When addressing members of the Forces as mentioned earlier, I have been struck by the eagerness of all to discuss and inquire into political and social problems, and by an unwillingness to swallow like a *bolus*, assertions made by party bosses. That was a good sign. In a recent general election it was obvious that the Eatanswill methods have fallen into disfavour to a considerable extent. In one constituency I noted that the three candidates for the seat appeared on the same platform at the same time and discussed their policies with care.

It is for us, the common people, that is the people of the commune or community, to bring our minds individually and collectively into this competence to handle our huge affairs, even as many by reason of their special training have done. Then we shall abhor any attempt to introduce into our political life the vicious compulsion methods of old times so readily adopted by fierce religionists who failed to convince those to whom they preached and so rushed to compulsion and pain to reinforce weak argument.

* * * *

Many railway journeys have come my way as I have taken contending words about the place, some of them long and wearisome. One I must make regularly, with such regularity that it becomes a real trial unless I read something that compels full attention, or unless the company in the train is pleasant and

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interesting . . . and that happens more frequently than most people would suppose.

The last thirty miles or so of this trip cross wild, open country . . . sweeping moorland ; but there is never any monotony in that scenery. It is never twice alike, as my father used to say reprovingly to me when, as a boy, I was specially impulsive in my statements. The light of day varies almost yard by yard as one passes through such surroundings : the few trees sway and commune with a different emphasis, and the colours of the sky shade off differently every time one comes along. One cannot read over this stretch of country.

I came along in the late autumn. As I looked out to the west and a darkening sky, beyond the rise of a dun hill of hogback contour, a hill that seemed to be snuggling down to sleep like a tired dog, there came a gentle warmth into the heavy sky. It spread into a gracious arc, and then, as suddenly as if a celestial searchlight had been unveiled down where the sun was setting, a single finger of glorious golden light reached up into the heavens almost to the zenith . . . a steady beam tingeing the dark clouds about its narrow path with unearthly beauty, and through its light one saw bunches of fleecy little clouds warming themselves, as it seemed, at its glow.

The beam remained still, pointing upward with complete stability . . . until the train, by taking a curve, put it out of sight.

Then one looked only on the dark curtain of the night slowly drawing itself up the sky . . . but a star peeped through.

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